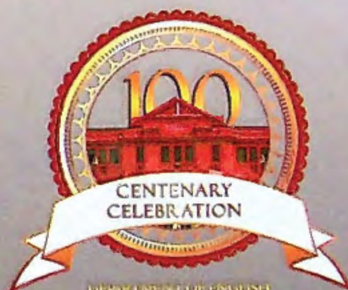
Souvenir

Hundred Years of Glorious Heritage



Centenary Celebrations 2022



Post-Graduate Department of English
Ravenshaw University, Cuttack

The English Language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination; it is the property of the language itself.

- Derek Walcott

Winner of Nobel Prize in Literature - 1992

SOUVENIR

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 2022
POST-GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
HUNDRED YEARS OF GLORIOUS HERITAGE
RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY
CUTTACK



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Ravenshaw University
Cuttack

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Governor, Odisha
ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ
ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



RAJ BHAVAN
BHUBANESWAR - 751 008
ରାଜଭବନ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୫୧ ୦୦୮



August 17, 2022

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the Department of English, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack is scheduled to organize its Centenary celebration on September 02-03, 2022. A commemorative souvenir is also being brought out on the occasion.

As the Department commemorates 100 years of its existence, this is indeed a time to commend all the faculty and students who have worked so diligently over the years to develop this department into one of the prestigious department of English in the country. It is indeed heartening that many alumni have proudly identified them in different spheres and have served as proof positive of the department's continuing success. This amazing journey has delivered and I am confident that it will continue to deliver even more building on a legacy of excellence. While celebrating the past with great respect the Department must look forward to its future with great enthusiasm.

On reaching this milestone I congratulate the Department.

I wish the celebration and publication all success.

Ganeshi Lal

(Ganeshi Lal)

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MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the Department of English, Ravenshaw University is celebrating its centenary year and also bringing out a souvenir to relive the past memories and past glories.

Hundred years of existence is indeed a rare milestone for any institution. In Ravenshaw, every student of the English Department carries the legacy of this glorious heritage. I hope they will carry forward this legacy to a greater height.

On this momentous occasion, I congratulate the students, faculty member and alumni association for coming together and making this event a grand success. The publication of the souvenir will be an insignia of hope and aspiration for the future generation of students.

(NAVEEN PATNAIK)

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धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान
ଧର୍ମେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନ
Dharmendra Pradhan





मंत्री
शिक्षा; कौशल विकास
और उद्यमशीलता
भारत सरकार
Minister
Education; Skill Development
& Entrepreneurship
Government of India

Message

I am glad to know that Department of English in Ravenshaw University is going to organise its centenary celebration on 2nd and 3rd September 2022

Completion of 100 years is a landmark in the journey of an education institution. Established in 1922, the Department of English in Ravenshaw University has traversed a glorious journey studded with numerous achievements. The development has played an important role in contributing to the intellectual culture of Odisha.

I am hopeful that, the souvenir will provide a space to the creative potential of the students, faculty members and noted alumni of the department, besides showcasing the achievements of the department.

My best wishes to students, faculty members and alumni on the momentous occasion. I am sure the department will continue to strive towards imparting holistic education to the young generation.

I wish the department very best in all their endeavours.

(Dharmendra Pradhan)

सबको शिक्षा, अच्छी शिक्षा



कौशल भारत - कुशल भारत

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SHRI ROHIT PUJARI
MINISTER OF STATE (IND. CHARGE)
Higher Education, Odisha



D.O. No. ..../MOSHE

BHUBANESWAR

Date 23/08/2022



MESSAGE

It is a matter of delight that the Department of English, Ravenshaw University is going to release its Souvenir on the eve of its centenary celebration. I am immensely pleased to notice the abundance of literary talents amongst students, faculty and alumni members who have contributed stories, poems and articles to the souvenir. I know they might have spent many sleepless nights to give full shape to their mouthpiece—this souvenir. This is not merely a souvenir, but is the unfolding of the hidden treasures of their experiences in this great institution of learning.

I wish them grand success for their centenary celebration.

(**Rohit Pujari**)

BISHNUPADA SETHI, IAS
Principal Secretary to Government
Higher Education Department



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Tel. 0674 - 2536862
E mail: hedsec.od@nic.in

D.O. No. ____________/PSHE

Date: ______________



Message

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to know that the Department of English, Ravenshaw University is publishing its much awaited souvenir on the grand occasion of their centenary celebration. Completing hundred years of existence is, in itself, a great achievement and the souvenir will be the official record of the numerous stories, efforts and endeavours that have gone on to make this department a center of excellence so far as the dissemination of knowledge is concerned. Each contribution, whether story or poem or article, is an exciting retelling of funny and interesting real life stories of the Ravensahvians. Such stories, anecdotes and retellings will be the source of inspiration for many forthcoming generations of students of the department.

I wish the Centenary celebration good luck.

Bishnupada Sethi
23.6.2022
(Bishnupada Sethi)



RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY

Prof. Sanjay K. Nayak
Ph.D, Ph.D (Engg.), D.Sc
Vice-Chancellor



MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure that the esteemed alumni and faculty, both old and new, of the iconic Department of English, Ravenshaw University have come together on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations of the Department.

I congratulate the alumni, students and faculty and well-wishers of the Department of English for their dedication and perseverance in sifting through the memories, which I am sure are numerous, to give shape to the Souvenir. The Centenary Souvenir would most certainly be a story of the achievements and aspirations and trials and tribulations of the Department of English as it marched through 100 years beginning from the early twentieth century. I am sure the Centenary Souvenir of the Department of English will be a special record in which history and literature come together.

I wish TEAM ENGLISH great success!

(SANJAY K. NAYAK)

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Lady Parvati Devi, Kaiser-i-Hind
Maharani of Sonepur

The youngest daughter of Rani Suryakumari Devi and Baidyanath Deva, Raja of Kashipur, Rayagada district, Koraput, Parvati Devi was crowned Rani of Sonepur on 18 August 1902. The consort of Birmitrodaya Sing Deo, KCIE, Dharmanidhi, Jnagunakar, she was revered as a gracious and philanthropic queen.

Her magnanimity enabled the construction of many religious institutions, and the famed diamond chandelier of the Jagamohana of Jagannath Temple.

Her contributions to the British War Fund and towards the people of Athgarh, Badamba, Narsingpur, Khandpara and Daspalla during the 1919 famine and the 1934 quake of Quetta are unparalleled. Kindness incarnate, she also adopted and rehabilitated countless orphans.

Her name will be honoured for her foresight and contributions to education. With an emphasis on the importance of English in Odisha, she never forgot her mother-tongue, publishing the Sashi Sena Kavya in 1928, a milestone in Odia literature, and many other illustrious works.

She was patron to Lady Hardinge Female Hospital, Delhi, Dufferin Female Hospital, Kolkata, Crawford Girl's School as well.

While the Maharaja created the P.G. Department of Odia in Bengal, she established the P.G. Department of English in Ravenshaw with an endowment of Rs.1,86,500/- on 22 July 1922.

In his dedication to Stree Shiksha (1921), Padmashri L. N. Sahu writes, "At whose feet should I offer my gift? I have seen in this distant palace of Odisha a gem of womankind. This gem of woman kind who was decorated by the British government with the title of Kaiser-i-Hind and was nominated a Life Fellow of Patna University."

Our grateful homage to you, Maharani Lady Parvati Devi!

Dr. Pabitra Mohan Nayak

The Rani Sahiba

And there she stands
Serene simple though magnificent
Dressed in ethereal regalia –
A vision
An angel without wings
Her like can't be visible anywhere
Within today's dazzling market panorama –
Nowhere within the modern, volatile
Easy to obtain
Popular democratic styles –
She is Rani Sahiba
Lady Parvati Devi Kaisar-i-Hind of Sonepur.

So many kings and queens of India
Are dead and gone,
Now, they only belong to the pages of history
But Rani Sahiba Parvati Devi still reigns –
Her child, the P.G. Department of English
Is ever bound to her in filial piety.
Her alumni sally out every year
With the Queen's image,
graven on their hearts.

So they can't afford to be mean
Like vulgar groundlings
Her annual Durbar is held every year
Called Annual Day –
And there she stands
Before all
To dispense dignity, serenity, benevolence and splendour
Which becomes
Every pupil's inheritance –
Long live - Rani Sahiba Lady Parvati Devi of Sonepur.

Shri Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak

Editorial

Ravenshaw College was established at a critical juncture of the history of Odisha when its people were still fumbling for an identity and struggling for achievement of political unification of their scattered lands. As a jewel in the crown arrived the P.G. of English which was a from Rani Sahiba Parvati Devi, KCIE of Sonepur in the year 1922 and since then the Department has never looked back. It has passed through several turbulent and eventful stages of our history and over the decades it has achieved marvels, tangible and intangible. Alumni, those who are still breathing are beside themselves for joy that their Alma Mater has turned into a glorious centenarian.

The Department has played a vital role in the modernisation of a people sulking for centuries over the loss of their vast empire. The Department of English updated the mind of our people to come level with a new world of national and global changes of dramatic importance. Some contend the choice of a foreign literature for P.G. education of our pupils. But it can be argued that at that time there was a sore need for a potent impact to liberate our stagnant minds from the thraldom of musty ideas and misty visions. And English literature, one of the richest on earth served the purpose in a brilliant way.The Anglo-Saxons were crafty and ruthless empire builders and they might have been "a nation of shopkeepers" bent on commercial gains and yet the Anglo-Saxons created a buddy of unique literature sustained over almost a millennium that for us had an exotic flavour. And it did our hearts and minds a world of good. It made us look for our own basic patterns of heritage, culture and native idiom. In time there emerged a host of literary celebrities over the last century. To mention the names of some of the poets and writers – Mayadhar Mansingh, Raj Kishore Ray, Guru Prasad Mohanty, Ramakanta Ratha, Gopinath Mohanty, Binod Nayak and Gobinda Tripathy should suffice. They made Odia literature win a distinction. It not only fascinated the hearts of the people but also at a tangible level won us some prestigious awards also. English language and literature also helped us to discover our past greatness loathe our subjugation. Their arrows on our land some crusaders and fighters of holing our language, literature and heritage.

Coming down to our Department, P.G. teaching started in some humble rooms adjacent to Kanika Library, later teaching shifted to Room No. 3 and 4 on the ground floor of Arts Block where teaching continued for about three decades and these were certainly not most elegant of rooms and yet celebrated professors of the stature of Prof. Sundaram, Prof. K. P. Sinha, Prof. Girija Shankar Ray, Prof. B. Das, Prof. O'Brien etc lectured to the their enthralled pupils who in later years rose high in social and administrative hierarchy And some of these celebrities have earned coveted places on the pages of our history of literature and history of freedom struggle. And inspiring teacher can create crusaders and geniuses teaching even inside a humble cottage.

At the moment our observation made by a notable person in an English National Daily comes to my mind. He says that the teachers of Ravenshaw College were wanting in exposure while those of the Ravenshaw University bring tidings from distant shores. Before making this sweeping observation the learned gentleman should have paused and pondered. The Department of English of Ravenshaw College enjoyed countrywide reputation. Now an anecdote might suffice. Once when a young teacher appeared in an interview for a teaching post in Delhi University, he was chosen right away, by the Head of the Department, Prof. Dastur who observed, "O you have got a first class from Ravenshaw College." And the young man was taken in. This shows the renown the Department enjoyed all around. Many of the teachers of Ravenshaw College were educated abroad, and amongst them stand out Prof. Sundaram and Prof. V. V. John who earned degrees from Oxford. Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Dash, Prof. Srimat Sahu had also obtained degrees from the UK. Teaching for most of these teachers was never a mere duty but an act of love and commitment. The student teacher interaction was profound. In a nostalgic recollection of his students of his early teaching career Prof. Srimat Sahu makes loving references to about thirty of his students of Ravenshaw College 50 years after he has left college. Prof. Trilochan Mishra puts on record the names of scores of his students with so many details. Prof. Mishra recollects such names with their details batch after batch consecutively for about two decades which is an astonishing affair. Prof. Mishra who lost his son, a jewel to our society could sustain himself against this grievous loss, through his memories and continuing relationship with his students.

The Department in Ravenshaw College had twenty-two teachers but this number in Ravenshaw University has fallen to only sixteen, although it continues to be a unitary university with undergraduate classes attached to it. The U.G.C. has put English Department of Ravenshaw University into the procrustean bed of its own prescription losing sight of the ground reality. While the number of students in P.G. and Honours classes is about four hundred, the number of students in undergraduate classes to be cared for is no less than two thousand. It is not humanely possible for sixteen teachers to handle this huge number. This adverse ratio of students' and teachers' number should be set right before long.

It is being complained that for the last three decades or so, the students of Honours classes cannot have adequate comprehension of the lectures delivered in the classes. Earlier this was never the case. The unwise dilution of the English syllabus at the secondary level has brought down the standard of students resulting in their dubious position in the Honours classes. After the dilution of English standard, the elite in the state are careful not to send their children to Odia medium government schools where patriotism is in operation. The English medium schools have flourished and multiplied in number in recent years. Government schools in hundreds with lowered standard of English languish being void of care and attention.

There has also another lamentable consequence of the dilution of English standard at the secondary level. These days a number of successful candidates in competitive examinations

at national level has suffered a decline. In a global village English has become the language of opportunity and to weaken our standard in English will never be in the best interests of Odisha. The syllabi at the secondary level please be revamped and English be given its due importance so that our youth does not cut a sorry figure around the country or outside of it.

The articles assembled in the present souvenir are by contributors who range from in their 20's to 80's. This proves we have accommodated all, irrespective of age. Even one or two happen to be beyond ninety. We can say they were students in the classical age of the Department of English. We find the images of some of the teachers shinning on their memories' horizon like the predawn Venus. But what was the magic that was wrought? May be these teachers were talented, quite sincere in teaching and dedicated to their job with enthusiasm. Love for classes with communication skill can make the classes impressive in time. The salary of the teachers then was not lucrative. Tuition culture was not there. In 1944 college teachers started with a meagre 140 rupees per month. These days there is a big hike in salary with lots of privileges. But what about the quality inside the classrooms? Do they continue to be as impressive as it was in the past? Is the magic of the old world of Ravenshaw still there or gone forever? Would the teachers of the present generation of Ravenshaw University ask if their students reaching their old age would adore the memories of teachers with such love and zest? It is a moot question they should be asking themselves and try to find the answer.

In hindsight we can see Ravenshaw gave us six Governors, eight Chief Ministers, and scores of peoples' representatives and statesmen and innumerable accomplished and mettlesome citizens playing multifarious roles in various positions of the States' and Country's life. The blessings Ravenshaw gave us is unmatched. This is the only college in the sub-continent on which a 500 page history has been written.

Now our debt to our Alma Mater should be redeemed alongside a world standard hospital and two world standard stadiums that are already there, now we should resolve and start working to make Ravenshaw a world standard university which before long should become the Nalanda of the East. Before the peoples' resolve and the government's determination it can become a possibility. And the Department of English as the queen of faculties should lead the way.

Shri Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak

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Associate Professor


Dr. Dipti Ranjan Maharana
Associate Professor

Some of Our Old Teachers



Prof. Narayan Mohan De



Prof. Girija Shankar Ray



Prof. P. S. Sundaram



Prof. Krutibas Samantaray



Prof. K. P. A. Pillai



Prof. B. Das

Some of Our Old Teachers



Prof. P. K. Pati



Prof. A. P. O'Brien



Prof. Sarbeswar Das



Prof. B. K. Tripathy



Prof. M. Q. Khan



Prof. Soubhagya K. Mishra



Prof. Ganeswar Mishra

Succession list of Prof. and HOD
P.G. Department of English, Ravenshaw College

1.	Mr. P. O. Whitlock	1922-1929
2.	Shri G.C. Ganguli	1929-1929
3.	Shri K.P. Sinha	1929-1936
4.	Shri Niranjan Neogi	1936-1938
5.	Prof. P. S. Sundaram	1938-1950
6.	Prof. G. S. Ray	1950-1950
7.	Prof. B. Das	1950-8.6.1959
8.	Dr. A. P. O' Brien	1959 -1961
9.	Shri K.P.A. Pillai, I/C	1961- 1962
10.	Shri N. K. Mishra, I/C	3.7.62-18.10.63
11.	Dr. P. K. Pati	19.10.63-2.1.69
12.	Shri S. Das, I/C	3.1.69-11.9.69
13.	Dr. P. K. Pati	12.9.69-27.6.70
14.	Shri S. Das, I/C	28.6.70-21.6.71
15.	K. P. A. Pillai	22.6.71-1.1.72
16.	Prof. S. Das	2.1.72-1976
17.	Prof. N. K. Mishra	1976-3.6.81
18.	Shri B.J.B Dasmahapatra	4.6.81-6.1.82
19.	Dr. M. Q. Khan, I/C	7.1.82-5.8.82
20.	Prof. H. P. Mohanty	6.8.82-9.12.83
21.	Dr. M. Q. Khan	10.12.83-4.8.92
22.	Dr. P. K. Mohanty	5.8.92-6.12.95
23.	Dr. (Mrs.) H. P. Singh	7.12.95-18.5.98
24.	Shri T. Acharya	18.5.98-15.1.99
25.	Shri D. P. Pattnayak	15.1.99-10.8.01
26.	Dr. B. K. Bal	10.8.01-2.8.02
27.	Dr. S. K. Joshi	2.8.02-29.9.03
28.	Shri A. K. Mohanty	29.9.03-30.4.06
29.	Dr. B. K. Bal	1.5.06-31.12.06
30.	Dr. Suman Mohapatra	1.1.07-31.3.08
31.	Dr. A. K. Purohit	1.4.08-31.10.08
32.	Shri C. Jena	1.11.08-30.4.09
33.	Dr. R. N. Mishra	1.5.09-25.2.10

Succession list of Prof. and HOD
P.G. Department of English, Ravenshaw University

1.	Prof. D. R. Pattanaik	26.2.10-22.7.12
2.	Dr. M. Pati	23.7.12-21.6.14
3.	Dr. S. P. Das	22.6.14-20.6.16
4.	Dr. Madhusmita Pati	21.6.16-26.6.18
5.	Dr. S. P. Das	27.6.18-28.2.19
6.	Dr. Sambit Panigrahi	1.7.19-19.2.20
7.	Prof. Sambit Panigrahi	2022

Down the Memory Lane

















from where the journey began...


Room No. 1


Room No. 3


Room No. 2


Room No. 4

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Reminiscences of the Glorious Department

Pages from the Last Century

Reminiscences of the Glorious Department

Ravenshaw and Department of English

Padmabhushan Ramakanta Ratha
B.A.: 1952-54, M.A.: 1954-56

I was associated with the Department of English from 1953 to 1956 (1953 to 54 as Hons and 1954 to 56 as a P.G. student). My teachers, among others, whom I fondly remember are Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das, Prof. A. P. O'Brien, Prof. P. K. Pati and Prof. Sarbeswar Dash. All of them were outstanding teachers by any standard. They were widely read and their way of teaching was very impressive. But, apart from teaching, they have left an indelible mark on me as adorable human beings. And, that has made all the difference to me.

Let me begin with Prof. Sarbeswar Dash. One day Prof. Dash came to our class, looking rather glum and disturbed. We all wondered if someone had told him something unpleasant. He was very touchy in certain matters, we had come to know during our association with him. But, soon our fear and apprehension cleared. It was revealed that I was the culprit as a poem of mine, published in some magazine, had disturbed him. The theme of the poem and, more importantly the diction and the imagery I had used was not in good taste aesthetically as he made it quite explicit in the class. Let me make it very clear before I say anything further that he liked me very much. He said very feelingly how for the last few days he found himself in a disturbed state of mind and did want to meet me and say what he thought about the poem and how I should refrain from writing such poems in future. I felt so guilty and thought I had perhaps committed a sacrilege by hurting my loving teacher so much, even though unwittingly. All the time he spoke on that single poem so earnestly ad with such visible pain and anguish on his face and in his voice that I was expecting when he would ask me to go out of the classroom. But no, he did not do any such expected thing. As he spoke, he wept (I wondered how a senior teacher of English Literature would react in this manner) and quietly went out of the classroom himself. But he was like that – predictable and unpredictable at the same time. Sometimes he would dismiss serious matters lightly and some other times, he would react or rather overreact to things that were apparently

trifles. But, both as a teacher and as a human being, he had an irresistible charm for the students and one felt like emulating him but one realized the magnitude of the task when one started doing it. He was just inimitable, to say the least.

Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das taught us Shakespeare and Criticism. During those days I was the Vice-President of College Union and Harish Chandra Baxipatra was the President. The students had a number of problems and both Harish and myself were busy addressing them as much as we could and mostly we were involved in the activities of the Students' Union. Prof. Das was, perhaps, not happy about my devoting so much time to Union work. I am not sure. One day (I do not remember exactly the context), perhaps in a very rough mood, I guess, Prof. Das to me, "You cannot get a 2nd class." (Those days no one got a 1st class in English, so a 2nd class was considered quite prestigious.)

And, I replied (I do not remember why I answered like that), "Sir, I hear half of our papers will go out of Odisha. And, if that is the case, I would get a 2nd class."
It is another story that I got a 2nd class, began my career as a lecturer at F. M. College, Balasore, was there for four months and thereafter got into I.A.S.

Prof. Das' erudition, wide range of reading and his articulation tinged with a bit of arrogance is something that I remember but I would like to add that our relationship remained warm and cordial, all through though it is widely rumoured to be not so.

Prof. Pati was laconic in his presentation of lecture, pointed, precise and brief, he never wasted words. He went to the very root of the subject and spoke with utmost clarity. He used to be an avid reader and he expected us to go the tough way. He did not like superficial study. In this context, I am reminded of a very interesting meeting with Sir. Once he gave us a written assignment on Shakespeare. I collected all the stuff that was available to me, and in my zest to impress my teacher I made a close study of the subject for days and wrote much to my satisfaction. I was sure that Sir would be happy to see what I had written. I gave my paper to him and stood quietly, eagerly anticipating congratulatory words from my teacher who, we all knew, was very fastidious in such matter. Sir went through the whole of my writing patiently and, at the end, commented in his characteristic way, much to my disappointment.

'Result of insufficient study'. Disappointed as I was, it was a lesson I learnt to my advantage. That we should be objective in evaluating ourselves instead of being complacent, and that there is always scope for further improvement.

It is during my association with the English Department and my stay at East Hostel that I started writing poems. Some of my friends and teachers encouraged me to write. I sent my poems to the Odia daily 'The Prajatantra' and the well-known magazine 'Jhankara'. But they were not published. The founder of the paper Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, eminent writer and politician, heard about me and sent the then Editor of 'Jhankara' to me for a discussion and thereafter my writings were regularly published. I was greatly impressed by Dr. Mahtab's commitment to literature and literary studies. He took much interest in organizing literary meetings and he used to patronize writers who wrote with a sense of dedication.

I am very happy to know that the Department of English of erstwhile Ravenshaw College is celebrating its centenary this year. I feel so proud that my Department, with its rich and glorious past, has completed 100 years. I am sure the teachers and the students of the Department, keeping in mind the stupendous achievement of the past, will carry it further to bring more glory.

I sincerely wish the Centenary Celebrations and the publication of the Souvenir huge success.

[Shri Ramakanta Rath, Former Chief Secretary Odisha, one of the most renowned poets in modern Odia literature, received the Saraswati Samman in 1992 and Padma Bhushan in 2006.]



A Page from the Lyrical Seventies

Padmashri Jayanta Mahapatra

My association with the Department of English of the erstwhile Ravenshaw College (now University) is very long. Long because it had started from pre-Independence days. After completing my Senior Cambridge, I took admission in the Science Stream. All the science subjects and the laboratory work occupied much of my time and the few classes we had in English at the Intermediate level were rather inconsequential. I remember the superb teaching of Prof. Girija Shankar Ray, who was discussing Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. And our first class in English, taken by the flamboyant Raj Kishore Ray. Unfortunately, I was a careless and disinterested student. But with the result of the First year Annual Exam, things took a different turn. Before I say anything further, I'd like to add that I used to be restless by nature, and am still. With the onset of adolescence, I grew more unsettled. I couldnot concentrate on my studies. Mathematics became increasingly difficult. And a little too soon, a year passed and the exam was over. My head started reeling when I saw my results. Except for Physics and Chemistry, my performance had been deplorable. I remember I had scored 17 in Maths and 23 in English. Never thought I'd score such poor marks in English when I had come from a well-known English-medium school. Till date I'm not sure where things went wrong. But then I realized perhaps I got the punishment I deserved because of my negligence in studies. No one in life, I thought, can remain untouched. I learnt later that my case had been placed in the Staff Council meeting and that some professors of English talked among themselves and decided to promote me to the 2nd year class 'under consideration'. Needless to say that I felt grateful to those teachers of English who had taken a liberal view of my possibly poor performance in the exam, without knowing me.

At home I couldnot show my face to Father. As always, Father didnot say anything. Only my mother reprimanded me. I had no convincing answer to counter her scolding. My study room looked like a closed box. Sad, depressed I stood vacantly by the lamp post near the pond. Donot remember what thoughts crossed my mind. But I did think of the Annual Exam. One full year to go. I made up my mind in a determined way. And soon the final I. Sc exam drew near. The month of March, 1944. The Second World War was at its peak. I had worked hard for a whole year, and that too, by lantern

light. In a few days, the exam got over. Results came out. I had got a first class and was among the top ten candidates. We got our Certificates from the Utkal University although evaluation of our answer-scripts and publication of results had been conducted by Patna University. The office of Utkal University started functioning in a room in front of the West Hostel. It was a new feeling, as all new things do at first.

There was a broad smile on Father's face and that was enough for me.

As I reflect upon the turbulent time I faced soon after the results of the First year Annual Exam were out, I cannot help thinking of the difficult phase of growing up.

With my great love for the English language and literature (In School I had always been reading a good number of books recommended by our Head Master and our English teacher. Another reason could be that I stayed away from most of my classmates who were rather cruel to me and, I guess, were jealous of me because I had been openly praised by our British Head Master). I continued my B.Sc. studies taking Physics as my Hons subject. Therefore, I had little to do with the English Department. Years later when I joined Ravenshaw College a second time as a Reader in Physics in 1970 and took charge of the department of X-Rays that I got associated with the English department in unexpected ways. Then, I was persevering at my rather egregious poetry. An unease I felt almost always, never left me, even when I was at work in the X-Ray Laboratory. Facing my room was housed the department of English; and smart young men such as Devanand Mishra, Chinmoy Jena, Frederick Wright and Bibhu Padhi had joined as lecturers in English. In early 1970s, I could already feel their voices running silently in my veins. Their dreams of an erudite life excited me. They kept coming. Intimacy grew in an atmosphere of joy, of sharing feelings. I always loved youngsters. I loved the company of the young – simple, away from worldly complications that invariably come with age. Chinmoy Jena became Chinu, Bibhu Padhi became Bibhu, Devanand became Dev and Frederick Wright - Freddie. Devanand, who looked up to me as did his other friends, inspired in me the deep sense of living with poetry and with the arts.

There had been one, and now there was another. It is within you that it is born. This sadness that no one understands. A sadness that exists not only in the heart, but stretches over the paddy fields, rivers, and winds that touch you but have no names.

Devanand Misra died about two years after my wife's death. It was sudden. It left behind a hunger that has not been assuaged till now.

Yes, the department of English held seminars and conferences from time to time and dignitaries from different parts of the country came. I was invited too. The Nobel Laureate William Golding with his wife had once visited the Department and I had an opportunity to interact with the famous author. I remember students and teachers putting questions to the Golding couple and they answering in a lively, informal way. Later on, I came to know that

during a conversation with them, someone asked Mrs. Golding about her husband's talent and she is said to have replied (much to the amusement of the gathering) "he was good for nothing".

I had not much to do with the English department of Ravenshaw, except for my warm association with Professor Sarbeswar Dash, from whom I had much to learn. Besides his exemplary human values, I have yet to come across someone who had his fluency of speech. I will not be unreasonable if I say that we expected from him some signs of greatness. He was my friend, and something good always spoke to me from the outer and inner qualities he possessed.

However, it was Devanand who instilled in my mind the idea of a quality journal in English. I was stunned. Here I was just a student of Physics with an almost scanty knowledge of English literature, but he had that faith in me that I could run a poetry journal. I felt I was an empty matchbox which could never be filled. Days of anxiety passed by. In the end Devanand's insistence paid. We titled the journal *Chandrabhaga*. It was printed by Letterpress locally and I had to oversee almost every page as it rolled out from the Press. It came out in summer and winter. My heart literally leapt as the issues appeared from the binder. And as subscriptions began to build from foreign universities, my joy soared.

Although the journal ran for eight years, until 1985, colleges in Odisha never subscribed.

Around 1985, Devanand left teaching at Ravenshaw and shifted to Delhi. He was the one who funded our journal, and was so involved with it that he himself brought the printing paper from Calcutta, and carried the heavy packages into our house. *Chandrabhaga* then ceased publication.

After a pause of some years, the journal now appears, once a year. It is hard work. Support from an institution like Ravenshaw could have made it a world-wide publication.

All that remains for me is a small feeling of gratitude toward Ravenshaw, where I studied for four years. But it is a gratitude, perhaps more intellectual than emotional.

[Shri Jayanta Mahapatra, the first Indian poet to win a Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2009. His works are classics in modern Indian English literature.]



A Message

Prof. Haladhar Panda
B.A.: 1954-56, M.A.: 1956-58

It is joyful news that the Ravenshaw English Seminar is celebrating its centenary year. I wish the celebration a grand success.

The occasion revives my memory of persons and events that impressed me deeply decades before when I was an Honours and P.G. student at Ravenshaw. One of the significant events was the message sent by F. R. Leavis, on our request, in which he exhorted us to be independent and relevant in our literary study. Leavis, as a teacher, writer, and editor of his journal Scrutiny, insisted on rejecting the prevalent method of historical-philological study of literature, in favour of a strictly literary-critical study of the same. Leavis also initiated a critical study of English poetry and study "The Novel as Dramatic Poem".

The classroom teaching of all my teachers was impressive enough. Thus, our Head of the Department, Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das had a wide-ranging study which was reflected in his classroom teaching, for example, his teaching of Donne's poetry covered wide areas of knowledge relevant to the subject, like the ideas and thoughts of Mumford, Sorokin, Will Durant, and others. Similarly, his teaching of poetry was related to painting and other arts. Thus, Spencer's word picture was related by him to a renaissance painting. Unlike Prof. Das, the then Reader of the department Dr. A. P. O'Brien was microcosmic. He would gather all details of sound and rhythm, image and metaphor, symbol and theme, and relate them to the overall meaning of the text under study. Our third teacher, Prof. P. K. Pati, would range over the works of an author while teaching a single work. Thus, he was teaching Jane Austen's "Emma" while surveying all her other novels, relevant to his discussion. Prof. Pati would go deep into the theme of the novel and show how the placid Augustan surface of the novel hides romantic depths of love and sincerity. Our other teachers were equally inspiring in their classroom work. Here, however, I would draw your attention to two of my teachers who went beyond the confines of the classroom and became "Friends, philosophers, and guides" to me. They were Profs. Sarbeswar Dash and Trilochan Mishra.

I would like to impress upon the organizers of the centenary celebration to create the then English seminar room attached to the Kanika Library as a memento to be preserved for the present and future generations of English students.

[Prof. Haladhar Panda is a renowned academician who has greatly contributed to the cause of education in Odisha.]

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In Grateful Remembrance

Prof. Madhusudan Pati
B.A.:1959-61, M.A.: 1961-63

Our ancient scriptures, epics and fiction insistently pronounce admonitions against ingratitude. Gratitude is affirmed both as a divine virtue and a social imperative. In the catalogue of Ramachandra's virtues and the thousand names of Surya Narayan and in the Sasemira story – just to name a few – gratitude is held to be a cardinal excellence. And so, even though I was contacted for a piece for the Centenary Souvenir of the Department of English at a time I was physically not in a state to write, I could not but feel sorry to miss an occasion for expressing my thankfulness to the Department which played a significant role in my transiting from adolescence to adulthood in mind and spirit. The organisers graciously called me a month later, reiterating their desire that I contribute a piece, however short and inadequate. But then my disability had not waned, and I could only helplessly apologise. Now again, when I am at Hyderabad on health grounds a request has been conveyed that I pen just a few lines relating my emotional and academic bonding with the Department. If I write, I would inevitably commit the sin of omissions and unseemly brevity, and if I do not, that of ingratitude. Here I am, trying to avoid the latter.

The Department of English in our days had a special status owing to the intellectual and emotional reach of the subject, its distinguished faculty, and the quality of its students. We held the teachers in some awe, but their caring touch could not be missed. In my case I was fortunate enough to receive kind ministration from more than one teacher. I can mention here only one of them – the late Professor O' Brien who asked me now and then to join him at his customary evening walks. He encouraged me to clarify my doubts, if any, and instilled in me a faith that I could secure a First Class in English Honours, something unheard of till then. Later he confided that he had offered his prayers for my success. Such blessedness come but rarely in life.

Atmosphere of love and friendship, and not simply cordiality and courtesy, prevailed in our class. Senior students in the Department were shown respect and junior ones affection. I happened to have a privileged position: having lost a year grudgingly doing Engineering, I found some of my old classmates from G. M. College now my

seniors. With time I found acceptance among others, too, as an earlier batch-mate. Thus I had a larger social space than my classmates. I used to be - because of both my 'seniority' and certain personal traits – referred to as 'old man' by some of my classmates. Lots of fond memories flood my mind at this moment. I can only express my gratitude to God for the rich wealth of fellowship that was in store for me at Ravenshaw College.

A Department, obviously, is made what it is by students, teachers and in part, the larger administrative and cultural ecology. I wish the present and future generations in the Department of English, Ravenshaw College, nurture a spirit of creative fraternity together with intellectual adventure and ethical commitment.

And now, fingers refusing to cooperate, regretfully I have to stop.

"Om Bhadram no Apivataya Manah"

[Prof. Madhusudan Pati, a prominent educationist and an outstanding teacher, has influenced generations of students in Odisha.]



My Alma Mater....

Dr. Susama Tej
M.A.: 1958-60
Teacher: 1969-76

It was in the year 1954 that I entered the most illustrious college of the state, the Ravenshaw College, as a student of Intermediate Arts. I had nurtured a dream from my childhood to pursue higher studies in this famous college and my dream came true. I was thrilled and excited to look at the red coloured, majestic and imposing building, the huge campus, the class rooms, the quadrangle filled with beautiful flowers, the Kanika Library, the sports field, and the unique Sundial in the middle of the path leading to the library and the Science Departments. Everything was looking perfect and the entire atmosphere seemed highly academic in nature. The corridors and class rooms vibrated with teachers par excellence and enthusiastic students. Thus, I became a very active member of this legendary institution. Ravenshaw College. Apart from academics, I also got the opportunity to participate in all extra-curricular activities like sports, dance, drama, debates, etc. organized for the holistic growth and development of character and personalities of the students. I am extremely grateful to my college where I got a chance to become 'somebody' in the society.

I completed my I.A., B.A. (Psychology Hons) and M.A. (English) from Ravenshaw College and pay my regards and respect to all my teachers who taught me and helped me develop an integrated personality based on high moral values. Our teachers were teachers in the true sense of the term, always ready to guide their students in the right direction.

When I think of my English Department, I feel proud because my subject is a Royal subject. English Department had a special glory associated with it. Somehow, we always felt we were different from others. I do not know how or why. It was not at all our ego or our sense of superiority, but a sense of pride that our subject has taught us the true meaning of life. I strongly believe that a student of English Literature, is exposed to various branches of learning, such as Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, History, Spirituality and this helps us enjoy the subject more. Apart from dealing with human emotions, feelings, sentiments through poetry, prose, drama, etc., appreciating and explaining literature also helps in our intellectual growth and understanding. Our teachers

were excellent academically and taught us to love and appreciate the subject. The English Department was fascinating and I liked it more and more as time passed. The memory is still cherished by me. We were only sixteen students in Vth year of M.A. Our classes were held in Room No. 3. Prof. B. Das, Prof. P. K. Pati, Prof. A. P. O'Brien, Prof. G. K. Das, Prof. N. K. Mishra, Prof. T. Mishra, Prof. B. K. Tripathy, Prof. D. Patnaik, Prof. M. Q. Khan were our teachers. I still remember their teaching and it is unforgettable. Their guidance helped me a lot. Because of them I am what I am today.

When I joined Ravenshaw College as a Lecturer in 1971, I was delighted and excited because I have to now act as a teacher in the same college where I was a student for six years. My Department was cordial to me. All colleagues, senior and junior, were so cooperative that I felt very comfortable. In the year 1973, we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Dept. with pomp and grandeur. A souvenir was also brought out for the occasion and I remember that my father's photograph was also there because he graduated with English Honours from this Dept. I felt so happy and proud. We presented an English play – Birthday Party – in which some teachers and students acted. Many such fond memories are there which make me feel very nostalgic.

Seminars and symposia were also held regularly in our department eminent teachers like Prof. S. Das, Prof. B. K. Tripathy, Prof. D. Patnaik, Prof. J. N. Patnaik, Prof. S. Mishra, Prof. B. Padhy, Prof. S. S. Mishra, Prof. N. K. Rath, and some others were my co-faculty members who took a lot of interest in teaching the students. How nice were the days with a team of devoted teachers so sincere in performing their job. I really feel very sad that some of them are in their heavenly abode and I miss them.

I should not fail to inform you all that from our family, five persons were the students of this department. They were my father, S. N. Mishra, my sisters, Anima Kar and Aseema Panda, my brother S. S. Mishra and myself. Our department was considered as the best department and now I feel so happy for everything that we did for the department I am proud of my department, my college and remember all my students who loved me and whom I too loved very much.

I wish the Centenary Celebrations a grand success and request all the youngsters to keep up the name and fame of the department and the great institution. You all should feel proud to be a Ravenshawvian.

[Dr. Susama Tej is a celebrated academician who has worked at various renowned institutions in Odisha. She also led Rama Devi College, Berhampur Women's College and S. C. S. College as the Principal.] □

The Years that were: Rajendra College to Ravenshaw College

Dr. Pabitra Mohan Nayak
B.A.: 1958-60, M.A.: 1960-62

It was a big leap in my life when I transited from Rajendra College, Bolangir to Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Much water had gone down the Mahanadi ever since I walked the spacious corridors of this giant institution. The big buildings remain. The hoary traditions remain. The halo remains. Only the nomenclature has changed. The college has grown into a university.

In 1958 I enter the English Hons. class as a student and the West Hostel as a broader. There was a row of rooms small enough to house equally small departments like Mathematics, Economics, English etc. each for 16 students only. Small but significant! This row was a short of bridge between the portico and Hall No. 1 where the sessions of Odisha Assembly were once held.

The English Department was distinguished from others by its box-like notice board superscribed Sonepur Chair of English. It took me quite some time to get what this Sonepur Chair, Mayurbhanj Chair, Kanika Library meant. But the very sight of the board brought me a sense of unobtrusive homeliness, an unerring sense of identity. I felt at home. After all, Maharani Lady Parvati Devi, the Founder of the Department hails from the place where I was born. While her consort Maharaja Birmitrodaya Sing Deo, KCIE, Gyangunakar, Dharmanidhi, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society founded the Post Graduate Department of Odia in Calcutta University in the very heartland of Bengal when and where the very existence of Odia language was questioned. His Rani Parvati Devi, Kaiser-i-Hind, Life Fellow of Patna University established the much-needed P.G. Department of English here in Ravenshaw College in July 1922. Magnificent instances of royal magnificence for the expansion of education, enlightenment and culture in the state.

English is a killer, my father, a Ravenshawvian in the distant 20s of the 20th Century, warned me who had the highest score in the subject in I.A. exam when I boarded the bus for Cuttack. Hardly 2 out of 10 who enter here emerge qualified for

lectureship. In the late 50s the number rock bottomed, forcing the Government to water down the qualifying marks. Yet it is a paradox that this Department is the largest. In Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi I met a Professor from Jodhpur University who headed, he asserted, a department of 26 members of the faculty. In our days the staff strength of English fluctuated between 13 and 16.

Of the rank holders only Ratna Raychaudhary and I took English Honours. The rest were Surendra Mishra (Later Parliamentary Secretary), Dhirendra Ray (Allied), Bhaskar Patnaik (Home Secretary), Ramesh Mishra (Allied), etc. Besides, there were two Bhagabans, one Jena, the other Mohanty. The latter Bhagaban from Bhadrak had a lean and hungry look, goatish gum, apish face, popish, gawkish ways. Donned with a longish half shirt and a dhoti, he was invariably the first liner in the class. No paper, no pen, no text book, this was my idiosyncratic classmate bemused with the dream of becoming the future Education Minister of the State. He would sit and stare right at the teacher's face which rather created an odd, awkward, embarrassing, irritable, comic situation. Once our serious tempered senior most teacher N. K. Mishra under whose deep grim, Homeric brows we had seldom seen a smile saw Bhagaban gazing at him with his usual unswerving look when he exploded, "Is Macbeth hanging on my face?" We do not know whether Macbeth dared dangling on our teacher's solemn mien but no Hamlet did during our P.G. days, for another teacher soft handled the Prince of Denmark. But I was different stuff. Rather aloof at hostel and college. I preferred the last desk. The Best Disciplined Student of Rajendra College was still chasing me.

Professor Bidhubhusan Das, B. A. (Oxon), MA (Patna) took our first Honours class. To see him was to fear him. With his gold-rimmed glasses, his deep penetrating eyes, his impeccable Oxonian accent, his wide range of reading, he looked still more terrifying to the wondering mind of an adolescent. We were given in the very first class, a long list of thirty must – read books. This is enough to rack the nerves of any ambitious student of English literature. I pressed on. For, a smooth sea never made a skilled mariner.

Long after, R.D.C., Northern Division came on a visit to Sonepur College. During the course of conversation, he stopped short and said, "Were you a student of Prof. B. Das?" My reply to Sundar Rajan was, "You are not only logical, you are astrological." My hands were folded in grateful remembrance of Prof. B. Das.

Once Prof. T. C. Nandi asked us to attempt an essay on Poetry and Philosophy. Next week he returned the scripts one by one while mine at the bottom lay. "Whose is this?" He picked up my script. "Did you attempt the essay? 'Your College Annual Day' in last IA exam?" was the next question. O! I still remember the essay! My confidence grew. My first paper presented to All India journal was built on Prof. Nandi's notes on *The Gracian Urn*. Here in the hostel, we felt greatly, gratefully relieved to see Prof. Nandi supplant the stiff-necked P. K. Dash, Chemistry, rather a bit dismissive in his demeanour, neither cordial nor convivial.

Professor Nandi, on the other hand, was a typical Bengali *bhadralok*, accessible and amenable. His clothes consisted of a full shirt, a pants and a pair of sparkling shoes. The Assistant Superindent, Kanhu Ch. Mishra, Odia, a man with a flowing robe as Prof. B. Das once depicted him was 'short-statured, swift-footed, glib- tongued. His steps were as swift as the words he spoke. He was in charge off the mess and its accounts, content with his portfolio he had a couple of beautiful daughters and their ethereal voices were the cause of occasional emotional commotion among the boisterous, Bohemian boarders. There were just a couple of boarders from the west in the West. Among them M. S. Pati (later Atibadi) and I hailed from English stream.

1960 came a gamechanger. U.G. turned P.G., West Hostel, P.G. Hostel. Which Jayakrushna Mishra, in his characteristic way calls Prakanda Gosala (P.G.). And into this Gosala, an old, dilapidated, discoloured, double-storied building known in local parlance as Mayurbhanj Kothi, we were herded in. Surendra Mishra (later Parliamentary Secretary) and I from English Honours. Where is the West Hostel with its vibrant cultural activities where to be in 'was very heaven?' And here was no common room, no compound wall, no problem. Situated in the midst of a mango grove on the OMP Square it looked like two words colliding and clashing, nature and the fringe of the big, busy, noisy city. 'Here mangoes and there man goes', once observed a fellow-boarder Jagannath Sa, Physics. And yet we lost the best of both the worlds – mellow mangoes and work and play and sleep, sleep that knots up the ravelled sleeve of the syllabus in a world of honking horns.

Thus, the P.G. Hostel days were comparatively calm and tranquil. Eventless. Perhaps the authorities thought it right for the senior students to exclusively concentrate on their studies. But could they? It was a place free for all. Even for formidable bulls

and stray cattle who occasionally created law and order problems free from the fear of the police. And who among the boarders was a *Bahubali*, strong enough to take the bull by the horns?

I had an insatiable passion for debates. Ravenshaw gave me the Borasambar Senapati Prize twice and the Inter-Hostel Debate Prize in three consecutive years. I had the singular good fortune to represent Ravenshaw in IIT, Kharagpur with Dhirendra Ray in 1962 where the topic was: Perpetual Peace is a Dream, and not even a Beautiful Dream. I stumbled upon this historic comment by a German militarist Von Moltke in my Random Harvest, a storehouse of statements collected since my school days and discovered long after this all-India debate was over. I had won for the first-time half a dozen inter-collegial in the history of Ravenshaw perhaps. In 1961 Ravenshaw sent me to G. M. College with Md. Ayoob on intercollegiate debate competition. The topic was: The World will be a better place if it is ruled by women only. No sooner was the topic declared than I casually, playfully said to Ayoob, keeping in the background the tradition Muslim denigration of women: The world will be a bitter place if it is ruled by women only with which Ayoob began the debate. Ayoob stole the thunder.

I had grown wiser by a year and when we met again at the same place in 1962 the topic was: Unilateral disarmament is the only way to world peace, Ayoob supported the motion. I opposed it. He lost, I won.

Swimming was my life. Swimming the river was my love. The venue was Taladanda Canal flowing by the West Hostel. What is Taladanda before the broad-bosomed Mahanadi? The sleepy waters of the canal before the high waves of the great river? So when the contest was announced, I jumped in joy. If you cannot see the tiger, see the cat. I plunged. I swam. I won.

Our M.A. classes put up a pan-Indian look with two Muslims and one Punjabi. They were various age groups. Young, old, middle-aged. Men and women. Birds of different feathers. We were one family with Wohid more Hindu than most Hindus.

Foremost among the teachers in M.A. classes were Dr. A. P. O'Brien with his big leather bag bulging with books, his curly hair, his stooping gait, slow, dignified movement, clad all in white so that when you see him from a distance, you can unmistakably say, 'here is Dr. O'Brien'. He is known to many as a wonderful announcer in our Annual Sports. Inimitable! His pronunciation tells him from the rest and his

occasional utterances are so impressive that to hear them is to remember them. *The Waste Land* is a panorama of futility. Likho man, Likho. Yeats preoccupation with the Abbey Theatre and the Irish liberation movement shook him off his dream-drifts. Likho man. Or, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is a long poem of short poems. Likho man, Likho is intermittently interspersed with such memorable expressions. On this occasion we remember with respect H. P. Mohanty with his soft, slow, movement and his sweet smiling face lit up with his critical, analytical, original mind. His Eve is beautiful in *Paradise Lost*, 'devastatingly beautiful'. And in Metaphysical poetry, heterogenous ideas are appropriately integrated, not yoked by violence together. Trilochan Mishra was always scientific, systematic, dramatic. K. P. A. Pillai with his inimitable accent, Baidyanath Mishra with his old weather-beaten R. D. Havens notes on Wordsworth too taught us. Ms. Pravat Nalini Das, the long-learned lady and Dr. Gour Kishore Das were fleeting presences. One left for Vani Vihar and the other for Delhi University. This was our royal department.

Regional Engineering College to Ravenshaw College M.A. exams were over by June 1962, and results out by September. My clever classmates got into jobs in private colleges. Ad hoc appointments were never made that year. So, I sat and waited for something to happen. For did not Milton say in the sonnet, 'they also serve who only stand and wait.; But I did not have to wait long. A miracle happened. One afternoon the postman came and dropped a letter on the window sill. A call for an interview I did not seek. I walked in. I walked over. I was appointed without application. I remembered Browning who woke one morning and found himself famous who woke me up while I was 'asleep upon a chair'? I knew I was not cut for a private college. I was searching for an answer and the answer came. I was appointed in Regional Engineering College, Rourkela. Fortune, like misfortune, comes in battalions.

I joined the Department of Humanities. Bharat Mallik was the Head. He had stood first in Matriculation, first in Hons, first class second in M.A. But they gave me three increments, so I had an edge over him – financially. The tail wagged the head.

Out came the P.S.C. results. I had ranked first in M.A. and now first in P.S.C. They posted me to B. J. B. But I did not budge. I didn't seek extension. Six months passed. Then all on a sudden a revised order came. This time for Ravenshaw. My Destination Ravenshaw! Teach in a place where I was taught! The call of Ravenshaw,

like the call of the sea to John Masefield, was a clear call and a sure call that could not be denied. I resigned the job. Prof. Bhubaneswar Behera, Principal, asked me to reconsider my decision. But my mind had already been made up. I left R.E.C. for Ravenshaw. Rs. 425/- for Rs. 280/-. You will regret, Nayak said prof. Behera, when I went to bid him bye, you will not get this salary, this quarters in Government for a long time to come. Which proved pathetically prophetic. Here, too, my colleagues wondered. So much for so little! Was I right? Was I wrong? My life holds the answer.

Here at Ravenshaw my new-found colleagues were D. K. Ray, Mahajiteswar Das, P. K. Mohanty, Paresh Raut, Soubhagya Mishra along with respectable elderlies like the Gandhian Sarbeswar Dash, M. Q. Khan, D. P. Patnaik, H. P. Mohanty, J. M. Mohanty and Dr. P. K. Pati, Head.

My passion for debates vied with my craze for the classroom. I was teaching Enoch Arden in Room no 45. The text had carried me to a poignant moment in Enoch's life. Was the shipwrecked sailor home after twelve years only to find his wife and children not his own? The world, his world looks another lonely island and the island a happy home.

The entire Enoch Arden is structured on this contrast clinched at the end with Enoch's death which drew a few drops of tears from my students empathetic eyes, with the stranded sailor shouting 'A sail, a sail, I'm saved! And then fell back and spoke no more. Do not know if Bateson's dry eyes had spared a drop for Enoch, but he was glad, he wrote back on a post card: I am glad Enoch Arden has a friend in India. On my paper, The Sea in Enoch Arden. On the occasion of the bicentenary of William Wordsworth there were two speakers invited to the Nagpur Session of All-India English Teachers Association, one, Prof. Ramesh Mohan, second, Pabitra Mohan Nayak.

Dr. Pati once convened a departmental meeting to seek the willingness of the staff who would spare any of their classes to D. K. Ray and N. K. Rath transferred from B. J. B. The staff, young and old, maintained a tactical silence. For they knew, the question was not as plain and simple like Dr. Pati's clothes, it was critical, equivocal. It cut both ways as was his wont. It was meant for those who wished to help them and those who wanted to help themselves, those who wished to accommodate and those who wanted to escape. Yet I stood up. I offered my B.A. classes. I dared where angels feared to tread. A reshuffle of classes followed. And that is where it all began. When

students came to know there would be a change of hands, they went *en masse*, led by Brahmananda Panda (future MP), to the Head demanding, 'we want P. M. Nayak and none else'. That was the issue. I became the eye-sore. I explained to the students who loved me so much that this would not serve their interest. This would not serve my interest, either studentsunderstood. The dust settled down.

One day while teaching prose in the I.A. class I saw one Kanungo sitting in the first row without the textbook. This looked anachronistic. The picture of BhagabanMahanty flashed in my mind's eye. I flared up. He wept. I wept. He fell at my feet. I raised him with my hands. I embraced him. We became friends.

Once I had a class upstairs the Psychology Department. The desks were all removed to facilitate the sitting arrangement for the ongoing exam. Seeing the room still full, I asked the students, should we hold the class? This is an opportunity you have willingly missed. Students look forward to suspension of classes, for this gives them scope to wander about, but what keeps you detained. You should have taken to your heels. How can you stand the whole period while I sit in a chair and teach. I am paid to stand. I declined the chair they offered. I spoke. They listened. The bell rang.

On one occasion a student of the B.A. Class was hastening to the Hind for the matinee. Dr. Dash, a student of mine who retired as D.D.P.I. told me the other day, he returned to the class when he heard it was my class on *King Lear*. Who can compete with Hema Malini? Only Shakespeare. The boy opted a dowerless marriage. The Duke of France still lives. Shakespeare still lives.

There was another occasion in another institution – Samanta Chandrasekhar College, Puri. One day as I entered the department, I found on the oval table an envelope superscribed P. M. Nayak, unstamped and sealed. But signed Siba Prasad Das, a student of English Hons. Just a couple of lines of warm appreciation and then abruptly concluded: I can write no more, Sir, for I'm writing in my blood. A student's precious blood for a teacher! I stood stunned. I got the guerdon of my life's labour! Just a fortnight of your presence on the premises. A class or two. You do not know him. He does not know you. And yet. An Ekalabya was reborn. When the results of the M.A. exam were out, Siba had scored the first class in the history of the P.G. Department of English, S. C. S. College, Puri. The shadow of Ravenshaw fell here on the sands of the shore of the sea. A student makes a teacher just as an audience makes a speaker.

The other day three of my old young students led by Arabinda Behera, I.A.S. met me at my residence with a request to attend Ravenshaw – 72, a get-together of friends from India and abroad. We were three – Prof. Srinibas Mishra, 93; Prof. Ghanasyam Das, 88 and I trembling on the edge of eighty, I was the youngest among the oldest. Representatives of three faculties, Odia, Economics and English. The mementoes they presented comprised a rich Kashmiri shawl and a giant teacup on which was embossed the proud picture of my Alma Mater. I kissed the cup.

Thus passed a decade of destiny – four years as a student (1958 – 62) and six years (1964 – 69) as a teacher, "When to the session of sweet, silent thought' on the Centenary of the Department, I summon up remembrance of things past, I recall those old familiar faces who have come and gone down the memory lane, flashes and flashbacks of those halcyon days. They were students I loved, friends with whom I lived and moved those unforgettable years. There were many, many others who flit in and flit out of the fading memory of this octogenarian Ravenshawvian. May I record here for lack of space and time only an infinitesimally small number of those who have played a significant role in the life of the country. The tip of the iceberg. They are AmulyaRatna Nanda (Registrar General, Census, India), Rajendra Narayan Das (Chief Secretary, Bihar), SudhansuMisra (CS, Odisha), P. M. Mohapatra (Director General, Academy of Administration), L. Mishra, R. K. Bhujabal (CS, Odisha), etc. among my friends and LabanyenduMansing, Gokul Pati, Manilal Tripathy (Former Ambassador to Japan), Ajit K. Tripathy (CS, Odisha), Subas Pani (CS, Odisha), Amit Kiran Deb (CS, West Bengal), Lakhmikanta Tripathy (CS, Tamil Nadu), Rajkishore Mishra, etc. among my students from I.A.S. / I.F.S. Cadre. On top of them all is ChandrabhanuSatapathy, Guruji, the standard-bearer of Siridi Sai.

[Dr. Pabitra Mohan Nayak, a distinguished academician and a motivating orator, has made his mark as a renowned teacher. He has also penned many articles and books along with the translation and critical edition of Six Volumes of *The Ramayana* by Sage Valmiki from Sanskrit to English.]

❑

Some Reflections of Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra, the Celebrated Poet on his Life and Association with the Department of English of Ravenshaw University

Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra

M.A.: 1962-64

I hail from Ganjam district. I was born in the year 1941 in Berhampur in a hospital. I did my schooling at Sri Mardaraj High School, Khallikote. Since my school days I loved to write poems. In fact my first poem was published in my school magazine in 1955. I had a friend who was senior to me by a year or two. He was a sort of mini Bhanja who inspired me to write. Earlier I used to prepare manuscripts of what I wrote but they are all lost now.

I came to Cuttack after my matriculation because my father was on a job which required us to be present in Cuttack. I am the eldest in the family. I have four brothers and one sister. And all of them are retired now, naturally. We were not rich, certainly not. But we could establish ourselves in life only by being sincere and hardworking students. It was extremely difficult for my parents to manage six children in Cuttack.

So, as soon as I passed my MA in 1964, luckily I got a job in Stewart Science College. That was a big relief for my family. Of course, two years later, my brother followed me. He joined Utkal University as a Lecturer first and then the Indian Administrative Service. So things looked better and my third brother who stood first class first in Physics worked for some time in GM College, Sambalpur and later joined a Bank, a Nationalised Bank as well as the brother next to him. And my sister was a teacher.

After completing Honours in Odia, I decided to study M.A. in English. Initially, I thought of going to Shantiniketan for doing my M.A. because that was the kind of idealism which we believed in those days. But, the counter was provided by Guru Prasad Mohanty's advice to go and study English in Ravenshaw. So, one friend of mine

Swarup Jena (the journalist) and I went to collect applications for admission. Then the office was in the Red Cross Bhawan - in front of Sailabala Women's College and we applied for Anthropology. Then, two days later, we decided to study English. Swarup Jena also joined the department, but after some days he left and I continued.

Prof. Trilochan Mishra would come to the classroom, and say, "Those who didn't have Honours in English may leave the class because there is no point of their being inside the class." So, that was the kind of encouragement we received. But later on, he realised. May his soul rest in peace.

Then we had regular tutorial classes and in the tutorial classes, we used to have tests and in every test I used to get 40% or 45%. That was also not very common in those days. So all the way they didn't expect me that I was going to do something remarkable. I had to drop the examination because partly I was ill and partly the question paper (Restoration Literature) was horrible. Dryden as a satirist... Congreve as a satirist... everyone as a satirist. What to write? We got disgusted. And 7 or 8 of us dropped. We didn't take that examination. And in those days, taking the M.A. examinations in Cuttack was really traumatic. The two rivers on two sides of the city would get hotter and hotter day by day, and the examination would commence only in May. And that too continuously for eight days. Only one day, Sunday would be free for us. All other days there were examinations.

Dr. Prafulla Kumar Pati never taught us. But, Prof. Trilochan Mishra did. Then, one Professor C. V. N. Dash, whom you may not know, he taught us Charles Dickens. And in those days, even books were not available. Prof. Harendra Prasad Mohanty used to teach us Tennyson and Metaphysical poetry. And, of course, Prof. Deba Prasad Pattanayak and Prof. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty. Prof. Mohanty taught us Eliot, not to our satisfaction but Prof. Pattanayak, although he handled *The Book of Job*, opened our eyes to a wider spectrum of literary activities and literary excellence. He was the person who rather informed us that there was a very meaningful literature in France, a meaningful literature in Italy, a meaningful literature in Switzerland. He was the person, Prof. Deba Prasad Pattanayak. We often laughed behind his back that the man was bluffing to us, but, even that bluffing was of very great use. Prof. Harendra Prasad Mohanty was good, but I cannot judge him. He used to come to the class and dictate

whatever he wanted to say. We noted down everything. Tennyson, I remember. Till yesterday, I had that copy. I had noted down everything on *In Memoriam* and with that our preparation ended, preparation of Tennyson. Prof. Trilochan Mishra was a good teacher. One day I was just standing in front of *Kitab Mahal*, that famous book shop at College Square, when Prof. Mishra came and said to me, "Why are you here?" I replied, "Sir, I have come to purchase a few books." "Purchase? What kind of a word is that?" We felt so small before him, and he took you on like that. He bought some books in the B. R. Mullick series. Then we found he gave some notes to a friend of ours on Charles Lamb. And we discovered he had copied everything from that B. R. Mullick series and B. R. Mullick was not original also. He had collected materials from different sources and put them together. But, I also heard this from Manoj Das that if you are thorough in B.R. Mullick, you will do well in the M.A. Examinations. It is true, to a great extent because B.R. Mullick had nothing original to offer. Now, B. R. Mullick is not available. Later we were good colleagues on different occasions at the university level and, in fact, we edited a book together for a certain class, a Book of Poems. Yes, he changed, he had to. Prof. Mishra was a good teacher from the examination point of view. Very good teacher. And, of course, we were taught by Prof. A. P. O'Brien for some time. He taught us Francis Bacon. He was also a very good teacher from the examination point of view. "Likho man, point 1, point 2, point 3", like he would say...

After my teaching in Stewart Science College, I taught in Ravenshaw College for five years and then I was transferred to B. J. B. College. From B. J. B. I went back to Ravenshaw for 3 years and then I left for Berhampur University. I am proud of all these three for different reasons. I will first talk of Berhampur University, then of B. J. B. College and finally of Ravenshaw College.

I did not have any job satisfaction in Berhampur University because in the senior classes you have a kind of obligation to the students and a different kind of responsibility. But the real joy of teaching comes in the undergraduate classes. The reason is postgraduate students were always thinking of their immediate future of joining a teaching job. So, they were least interested in the studies in the right sense. They did not study literature as literature. Hardly anyone did. They studied literature for marks, and once that was fulfilled they thought they had realized their goal.

By the time I came to B. J. B. college, my first two books had already been published. And, in this context, I will tell you an interesting experience. One day I received a letter. The letter was about a poem of mine published in some magazine, I do not remember. The poem was about Ganesh Puja celebrations in colleges. My only fault was that the speaker in the poem was talking about drinking alcohol which was hidden behind the statue of Lord Ganesh. And that enraged this writer so much that he called me names in that letter. I remember showing that letter to Mr. KhirodPadhi, my student and colleague.

But I should say that I got better students in the Science department of B. J. B. college than Ravenshaw. But Ravenshaw was Ravenshaw and B. J. B. was B. J. B., because in B. J. B. there was an administrative problem. Since many students came from the higher echelons of Bhubaneswar society, they just did not care for the educational decorum that was necessary for the college or for college education. I remember one Chief Secretary's son created problems in the college, of course not with us. He was a student. I've heard this story. And the Principal was a very strict person. Yet, the Principal had to remain faithful to his patience. In fact in B. J. B. college our greatest achievement was restoring some semblance of discipline. We three – me, one Digambar Mishra (a friend of mine) and Rabindra Kumar Mishra, both from the Political Science Department. We three somehow managed to bring the atmosphere in the college under control.

That was 70s. 1970 was a crucial year, in fact the change was about to occur in Ravenshaw College also, all over Odisha. Even the girls started resorting to malpractice. Now to the English Department of Ravenshaw University.

After Stewart Science College, I got selected by the Public Service Commission for the post of Lecturer. Incidentally, I got a first class in M.A. So, I got my first appointment in Ravenshaw College. And, that was a glorious period in my life, five years... first five years of my service career.

I was a student of the M.A. class in Ravenshaw College and the day I got an appointment to join Ravenshaw as a Lecturer I cannot explain the thrill and the excitement I experienced at that moment. Entering the staff common room into which we never dared to enter during our student days and asking Kanduri (who was serving

us there inside the staff common room) for tea. I vividly remember those days and the staff common room, my colleagues. All the colleagues were senior to me. So naturally, I was the junior most man in the Department. And then, so many things happened. So many interesting things which would take a long time for me to recount and recall. My first Head of the Department was Professor P. K. Pati. He was a very strict person. But, right from the beginning, he was impressed with my performance in the Department. Therefore, though outwardly he was very strict, he was soft and had a soft corner for me and a sort of he guided me through my first five years in Ravenshaw College.

Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das once came to our Department. Then he was in Nepal. We all were nervous. At that point Prof. Harendra Prasad Mohanty came and told me that Prof. Das was calling me. I got panicked, literally perspired. Then I got into the room shaky and shivering and stood beside Prof. Das. To my great relief he said, "I am very proud of you Mishra". I was confused. Later I could know Professor Pati and some senior colleagues had briefed about me to Prof. Das. I was very young then.

My biggest failure, I should say, I couldn't, why I, most of us, we couldn't train the students or give a taste of literature to the students. We couldn't teach. There were very bright students, brilliant students, we had. We were proud of them, but... I remember once I was sitting in a meeting and some literary meeting was going on and a boy from behind asked me in a whispering tone, "Sir, who is Ramakanta Rath?" And, I was very annoyed. I said, "You fool, you are in the sixth year M.A. and you do not know who Ramakanta Rath is? Why should you not know?" As a student of English, why should he not know who Ramakant Rath is? Or for that matter, by the way, Ramakant Rath was a student of English. Why shouldn't you know who the Odia poets are there? You would know about Italian poets, you would know about French poets, but not about Odia poets! That I could never reconcile. And in Ravenshaw College in the tutorial classes, I have managed with examples from Odia poetry. I have taught English poetry with the help of these poems. That joke, "How many daffodils did Wordsworth see?", "what was the colour of the Daffodils?", These interesting questions. Now, I would not see daffodils for the 25 or 30 years of my life, yet I would be talking about them. And there was no scope for us to show the daffodils, we hadn't ourselves seen.

Now, things are like... no teachers are motivated. And, I equally blame the teachers. I said that it is my failure and it's the failure of my fraternity. We could never do that.

To love literature as literature, very few very few indeed you come across these days. Future of literature, as far as I can see, is bleak. However, some interest is still there. But these days it's a different phenomenon. Students who come with a bit of creative writing, they are only interested, they are only interested in literature.

You often notice the craze for I.A.S. No, no, I never had that craze. I loved teaching, I still love teaching. Only recently, I think a few days ago, I told my wife, "I would have loved to be a Collector of a district." She said, "Why, at this age and at this time. Why are you saying this?" I said, "No, I saw a couple of Collectors, very young people. Someone getting into the I.A.S. at the age of 21, in the first chance. You really get envious of them. And lo and behold, I think, the lady who was caught in Jharkhand recently, she had amassed 19 crores and she got into the job in her 1st chance. And, I think a couple of I.A.S. officers are in jail in Odisha also. That is one side of the story. But the power they enjoy maybe I had this temporary feeling that you cannot really do anything in the present circumstances unless you have some political power. Political power and bureaucratic power are inseparable these days."

As a matter of fact I was always happy with my job and with my students and with my teaching and all that.

[Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra, a celebrated poet, received the Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award and Gangadhar National Award. He was on the advisory board of Odisha Sahitya Akademi, Central Sahitya Akademi and National Book Trust.]

(This write-up is the offshoot of a cordial discussion of Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra, an illustrious alumnus of the Department of English of Ravenshaw University, with his three students, Dr. Satyabrata Das, Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra, and Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty on 20 May 2022 at Prof. Mishra's residence in Bhubaneswar. The discussion was recorded by Dr. Anshuman S. S. Mohanty.)

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My Ravenshaw Days in The Department of English: Some Reminiscences

Prof. B. N. Patnaik
B.A.: 1960-62, M.A.: 1962-64

I joined the Department of English of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack in 1960 as a student of B.A. Honours in English and I did my Master's in that subject there between 1962 and 1964. Then in April, 1973, I joined the department as a member of its faculty. Two months later, we had the summer vacation and in early August, I left the college to do my research. It was in 2010 or 2011 (I cannot recall), that I spent a fortnight there as a Visiting faculty member – it had been upgraded to a University by then - teaching Linguistics to the M.A. students who had chosen Linguistics and E.L.T. as their option. This has been my association with the department of English of this very well-known and much-respected institution.

Here I write only about my student days. I spent too little time in the department as a teacher. That's why I am not inclined to write about my experiences as a teacher there.

Professor A. P. O'Brien was the Head of the department of English when I joined the Honours course. Professor Bidhu Bhusan Das had just left to join an important educational assignment in Nepal. He returned to Odisha many years later. I met him when he was the Director of Public Instruction (D.P.I.) of Odisha. In the early nineteen seventies, he was promoting English Language Teaching (E.L.T.) and was encouraging the college teachers of English to do the Post-Graduate Diploma (P.G.D.T.E.) Course at Central Institute of English (C.I.E.; now called "English and Foreign Languages University"), Hyderabad. In 1972, when I met him at his office and told him that I wanted to do the P.G.D.T.E. Course, he was very pleased and granted me full pay leave to go to C.I.E. that year itself.

Part of the application to C.I.E. for admission to the Diploma Course was a one-page write-up by the candidate on the E.L.T. situation in India. As Professor Das read my piece, he found an error in the first sentence itself – I had written "I shall confine to this topic"- and he corrected it to "…confine myself to…". "Confine" is a transitive verb but I had used it intransitively. He didn't say anything to me about the error. He said my piece was good. I remember this incident with much fondness.

To turn to my Honours study, we had almost exclusively British literature in our syllabus. There was hardly any American literature in it, except for a play by Tennessee Williams ("A Street Car Named Desire"). No work in English translation was included in the syllabus. Camus's "The Outsider" was the toast of the young intellectuals of Ravenshaw College those days and we, who cherished to belong to that informal and prestigious group, read the book. I must have read it twice or three times. Most of our teachers did not think much of American literature and some were outright dismissive about it. When I was in my M.A. final year, American literature was introduced as an optional paper only at the M.A. level – optional, to the Essay paper. Almost all of us, forty students, chose American literature. I enjoyed reading, in particular, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Walt Whitman and R. W. Emerson.

Teaching a literary text at the Honours and M.A. levels at that time meant providing information about the political and the socio-cultural situation in which it was written and situating it in the history of English literature (the tradition). In certain cases, some biographical information about the author was included in the lectures. The views of the literary critics on the text formed an important part of the lectures. But there was no critiquing of the same - a list of observations cannot provide a perspective. By the way, there was critiquing, although somewhat unstructured, in the lectures of Dr. Sriram Chandra Das (Political Science) and Dr. Altaf Hussain (History). So it cannot be said that evaluating scholarly views was not there in undergraduate teaching in our college. Somehow it was missing in the lectures of the teachers of our department. As for the prescribed texts, the students were expected to read them. Very little of the text was taught in the class. The lectures were more about the text than the text itself. I found the scholarly lectures boring. It was to study literature that I had joined the course, not to know about which great critic said what profound things about a literary work. Probably it was terribly naïve of me to think so.

Mr. Gourkishore Das (he hadn't done his Ph.D. then), who was not merely my teacher but my mentor, was an exception to that mode of teaching literature. He had spent a year as a British Council fellow at the University of Exeter, if I remember, and when he returned, he wasn't the same teacher as he was before. Earlier he used to speak fast, almost non-stop, during his lectures, but after his return, he spoke slowly and a great deal more clearly and his language was not unduly scholarly. He was teaching a Shakespearean play. He would read out the text in the class, skipping what he thought could be skipped and explain and then comment on what he had read out. Unless for reasons of clarity he felt it was necessary, he avoided giving information about the

socio-cultural milieu in which the text was written. His lectures were not loaded with the views of many literary critics. Scholarly discussion on the text was there, but in his teaching, the text became primary and information about the text, secondary. I liked his teaching. After just a few months, he left Odisha Education Service to join the University of Delhi. He had a very successful career there.

Although we had probably three plays of Shakespeare in our syllabus – one tragedy, one comedy and one historical play - we were strongly advised to read all the Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies and some history plays. Despite the advice, I do not think I had read more than five or six plays of Shakespeare during my Honours days; if at all any of us had read all those plays we were advised to read, it must have been Sandhya Mohapatra. It was never clear to me how I would understand *Macbeth* better, if I read *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello* but I didn't ask this question to my teachers. We were not encouraged to ask such questions. But at the same time, I wasn't going to spend effort on doing something the rationale of which was unclear to me. However, it was not the case that my reading of literature was syllabus-driven. I read a number of plays by Bernard Shaw, who was my favourite playwright, some works of Aldous Huxley, a little of Bertrand Russell and of course, Camus – none of these in the syllabus.

I was extremely fortunate that Dr. O'Brien liked me and very often asked me to join him in his hour long evening walk in the college field. Once, during our walk, I asked him how I could improve my English. He said I must read a lot in English. I asked him how that would help. He told me that exposure to good writing helps and that one's command of the language improves without one's being aware of it. I left the matter at that. The point of my saying this here is that Dr. O'Brien did not discourage me, a callow undergraduate, to ask questions and insist on answers.

Our teachers wanted us to read books outside the syllabus but our reading received no guidance from them. I was fortunate in this respect. During one of the evening walks, Dr. O' Brien asked me to read Par Lagerkvist's novel "Barabass", a work in translation. After I read the book, I told him that I liked the story but I wasn't sure that I had really understood it. In a reassuring and somewhat casual tone, he said it's a story about "the unconscious development of conscience", and asked me to read the book again from this point of view. Needless to say, re-reading the book was an enriching intellectual experience for me. When I told him that I liked Camus's "Outsider" very much, he asked me to read his "The Fall". Some of T. S. Eliot's Ariel poems were in our syllabus. He said I should read his "Murder in the Cathedral". Later I realized that he liked the works that dealt with profoundly important moral issues, about sin,

repentance and salvation, not necessarily in the religious sense of the term "salvation". In the midst of a lot of talk on all kinds of things, much of which was on politics – national and local - he would, on my insistence, make some brief remarks on the book he had recently asked me to read. I would then re-read the book in the light of his illuminating remarks. This is what I call "guided reading". In passing, I wish to say that years later, at C.I.E.F.L., I had the good fortune of more intense "guided reading" of literary works under the benign care of Professor V. Y. Kantak, the eminent scholar and critic.

On the matter of reading literature outside the syllabus, none of the faculty members in our department encouraged us to read Odia literature. But then, as mentioned above, by and large, they did not recommend to us American literature and Commonwealth literature or Indian writing in English, either. As for Comparative literature, it was not in the air. Our syllabus was quite conventional. But to be fair, I do not think in the mid- sixties, the Honours programme in most of our universities was very much different. Having said that, in the specific context of Odisha, American literature, Indian Writing in English, etc. was one thing, Odia literature, another.

Probably because of this orientation of the department, we did not have the opportunity to listen to Dr.MayadharMansingh. He was very probably the first Odia to obtain the Ph.D. degree in English. We knew Dr. Mansingh as a celebrated Odia poet but did not know anything about him as a scholar and a critic. The younger members of the faculty did not think much of his doctoral work. They had the same opinion about Dr. O'Brien's also. I distinctly remember one of them telling me that his Ph.D. was on a minor poet. Later I got to know that he had worked on Gerard Manley Hopkins! During our evening walks I recall to have asked Dr. O'Brien about his Ph.D. work. He hardly said anything other than just this: it was done a long time ago. When I met him in Berhampur some years later (he had completed his term of five years at BHU, Varanasi, where he had served as a professor of English), he spoke quite enthusiastically about the research of his five Ph.D. scholars. Returning to Dr. Mansingh, I was lucky to interact with him at Khallikote College, Berhampur for just a few weeks. I found his observations on literature fresh and illuminating. It's a pity that the period of my interaction with him was short because I left Utkal University service (the Berhampur Evening College where I taught was under Utkal University) to join the Orissa Education Service.

Mr. C. V. N. Das's teaching wasn't memorable. He often complained that he had to give a lot of time and effort to N.C.C. work. He was a shy person and somewhat aloof. One day I went to his house. He told me that he was translating Fakirmohan's

famous novel "Chhamana Athaguntha" and he told me not to tell others that he was engaged in doing that work. Maybe such activity was considered lowbrow by his colleagues. He was probably the first person to translate this work into English. I visited him many times after that day and each time he would read out part of his translation to me. He published his translation but I do not know how it was received. I have the feeling that he didn't get his due. I remember his laudable effort with much respect.

I heard about Professor P. S. Sundaram from Dr. O'Brien and was fortunate to listen to his talk on Subramania Bharati. That was before I joined the Honours course. What he said I do not remember; all I do is that his presentation was lucid and his scholarship, enjoyable. By the way, he was not the guest of the department of English but of East Hostel, where Dr. O'Brien was the Warden. The members of the faculty of English, by and large, did not approve of his interest in Tamil literature. The general attitude was this: only those who are failures with respect to English literature (that is, "British literature"), turn to their local literature. Maybe this explains why Mr. C. V. N. Das was hesitant to let others know that he was translating an Odia novel!

During my four years of Honours and Master's in the department, I didn't have the opportunity to listen to any guest lecture. I do not know why well-known teachers of English from Calcutta University, Vishwabharati University and Patna University were not invited to speak to us. Some of the senior teachers of our department had studied in one or the other of these universities. We had heard of Mr. Prafulla Kumar Pati, who was known as a scholar and widely regarded as one of the very best teachers of English in Odisha. He was teaching in Bolangir College then. We never had the opportunity to listen to him. The culture of having guest speakers and exposing the students to well-known scholars from outside the State, even the College, wasn't there in the department. I do not know whether it was the same with the other departments of the college then. In any case, the students are the losers in this situation.

I leave my narrative of my Honours days here. I did reasonably well in the University examination in terms of the standards of those days. I was second-class first in Honours and had distinction in other subjects. I was second to Sandhya but with a first class, she was literally a class apart!

I wasn't keen on pursuing my Master's studies in English and in case I finally chose to study English, I didn't want to do it in Ravenshaw College. I wanted to study Journalism or Political Science. My lack of enthusiasm for doing my Masters in English in Ravenshaw College was due to my feeling that I was going to get, essentially, more of the same. The faculty was the same, except that Professor O'Brien had left for B.H.U.

and Mr. K. P. A. Pillai, who was a good teacher, had gone to F. M. College, Balasore. He was in our College for only a few months.

By the way, talking about Mr. Pillai, he taught me how to write, mostly about how to use the right word at the right place. How to write of course involves much more: how to choose what to include and what to exclude in a piece, how to organize the material, how to begin and how to conclude, etc. He would ask me to submit a piece to him and he would improve it in my presence. Our interaction was short because as mentioned above, he did not stay long in the department. No one taught us how to develop competence in writing. It was taken for granted that we would acquire this skill on our own.

To return to my lack of enthusiasm for post-graduation in English in Ravenshaw college, I knew that the style and the approach of my teachers to the teaching of literature at that level was going to be the same as what it was at the Honours level. Only the texts would change. The prospect was not exciting. Mr. Harendra Prasad Mohanty, a solid scholar and a sharp mind, had often told me about his teachers at Patna University: Professor Kaleemuddin Ahmed and Professor R. K. Sinha. I wanted to do my Master's with these eminent scholars, if at all I chose to continue my studies in English literature.

I shared my career plan with Mr. Qamruddin Khan, my teacher, who was very affectionate towards me, and Mr. Sarbeswar Das, who I knew and who was my well-wisher. Qamruddin Babu (that's how we referred to our teachers, which was the norm; we addressed them as "Sir") totally disapproved of it. He wouldn't hear of my going for Political Science or for some other place. Sarbeswar Babu poured cold – ice-cold, really - water on my idea. He told me that since I did not come from an economically comfortable family, I would have to take care of my parents and my siblings, and getting a secure job soon after doing my M.A. had to be my sole consideration in making my career plans. M.A. in English would give me a secure job. He said Patna would be an expensive proposition. I would get scholarship if I studied in Ravenshaw College, which I wouldn't get if I went to Patna. His advice settled things for me. Never again did I think of either Patna or Political Science.

Prafulla Senapati, my batch mate, went to do his M.A. in English in Delhi University. In his long and interesting letters he wrote glowingly about the department there. If I remember correctly, he made special mention of Professor Kaul in many of them (and Professor Rajan, but I'm not sure). Kona Roychowdhury, who had a good Honours, did not do her Masters in our College. Neither did Sandhya Mohapatra, rather surprisingly. Hers must be a singular case in Odisha – of a student who did so well in

Honours but did not do her M.A. We heard that she did not want to continue her studies in Ravenshaw College. I do not remember who told us.

In the M.A. class, we were forty students. Some, like Prafulla Chandra Kar, joined the M.A. programme from our college. Most had come from outside. Among them was Manasi Chandra, who had won the prestigious Chancellor's Debate competition earlier that year.

Teaching was as I had expected – essentially more of the same. Now we were advised to read all the plays of Shakespeare. I read the tragedies, a couple of historical plays, a few comedies and some of his late romances – about a dozen or so plays in all. Maybe, Gita Padmanabhan, Prafulla Kar and Krushna Chandra Mishra, who were very studious, had read more. The rumour was that Madhusudan Pati, our senior, had read all the plays of Shakespeare. He was the first student who had a first class Honours and a first class M.A. in English. If I did not read Shakespeare, I more than made up for it by reading Mahatma Gandhi's writings. No one had asked me to read Gandhi. I knew that reading Gandhi would not help me in getting a good grade. But that didn't bother me in the least. He was my favourite author as were Bernard Shaw and Camus during my Honours days.

Mr. Harendra Prasad Mohanty was analytical in his approach and he stood out as the one who discussed the language aspect of a literary text. That approach, which may be called "literary stylistics" was new to us. He was the only teacher who drew our attention to the use of language in literature. There is another thing I remember about him. Once he told me during an informal conversation at his residence that our study of western literary criticism (i.e., I.A. Richards and F. R. Leavis) should not be an end in itself. Eventually we should apply those ideas to our own literature. I now tend to think that this point of view was an influence of Professor Kaleemuddin Ahmad on him.

This was an interesting idea but I wasn't quite persuaded. A Leavisian perspective might, I thought, rate the poetry of Guruprasad Mohanty and GyanidraBarma much higher than that of Mayadhar Mansingh or Radhanath Ray and this evaluation I wasn't comfortable with. Mohanty's "Kalapurusa", a much-talked about poem in certain circles in the College, reminded me too much about "The Waste Land". My untrained mind looked upon it as a "translation- poem", not a "translation" of T. S. Eliot's celebrated classic. I didn't tell Harendra Babu my reservations and he didn't talk about the approach under reference again.

Another teacher who introduced novelty into the teaching of literature was Professor Prafulla Kumar Pati. He had obtained his doctorate from an American University (I cannot recall, which) and had been elevated to professorship before he joined the department. His approach was essentially this: read the text thoroughly and carefully. Do not read much literary criticism. Do not go to the text from history of literature and literary criticism; read the text and then read things about it (literary criticism). As far as the teaching of English literature in Odisha was concerned, Professor Pati's was an extremely innovative approach. He was an excellent teacher and was the best exponent of his approach. He would read the text in the class almost line by line, explicate the text and make cross references wherever relevant to other works by the same author and to the comparable works by other authors. I liked this style of teaching – I thought at last I had some kind of an answer to why one should read many works of an author, not prescribed in the syllabus, how reading other related works would increase one's understanding of the text, etc. It was not that cross referencing was missing in the lectures of the other teachers; in Professor Pati's teaching, however, it was much more conspicuous. It was part of his teaching strategy.

There was no research culture in the department those days. That could be the reason for the lack of critiquing in the teaching. For years Dr. O'Brien was the only member of the department who had a Ph.D. degree. The same was the case after Professor Pati joined the department in 1963. Our teachers didn't think much of research. Some indeed said so. They said that scholarship as an academic value was more important for them - I. A. Richards didn't have a Ph.D. degree, did that matter? But somehow it was missed that F. R. Leavis, who had been cited in our teachers' lectures more frequently than any other literary critic, had a Ph.D. degree. It was also missed that his Ph.D. work was not on some poet or playwright, minor or major, but roughly on journalism and literature – on "the rise and earlier development of the press in England". Some of our teachers and seniors told us that one must teach for twenty years at least and read widely and wildly during those years before one could think of doing doctoral research. By the way, at that time, there were many doctorate degree holders in the prestigious Economics department of our College.

Professor Pati tried to introduce research culture in post-graduate teaching. He introduced seminar classes. We had to write short pieces on books and authors and present them to the class in Professor Pati's presence. Discussion would follow. Hrushikesh Mishra, my batch mate and close friend, told me that he wrote a piece on

Marvell. I do not recall what I wrote on or whether I wrote anything at all. At that time I was unenthusiastic about it. I do not remember why. Now I think it was an important initiative of Professor Pati.

As I proceed towards the conclusion, let me say that despite certain limitations, the training we received was certainly good. The syllabus was comprehensive in coverage. Important works of major authors of all periods in British English literature were prescribed for study. Most of our teachers tried to give us their best. In this context, I fondly remember the three or four classes Mr. Manoranjan Hota taught us, on request by some of us. He was senior to me by a couple of years, I think and he had just joined the department. Some of our teachers were very well-read and were familiar with the latest in literary criticism. Talking about my M.A. days, the teaching of Professor Pati, Mr. Trilochan Mishra, Mr. Harendra Prasad Mohanty, Mr. Nanda Kishore Mishra and Mr. Kshitish Deb, all of them senior teachers, and Mr. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty, Mr. Qamruddin Khan, the younger teachers, was very useful from one point of view or the other. Some such as Mr. Kshitish Deb and Mr. Trilochan Mishra were extremely successful class room teachers. In fact, Mr. Mishra was outstanding in this respect. Our teachers were accessible to us.

Talking of access to teachers, I was very fortunate. I enjoyed much affection and much goodwill. Mr. Harendra Prasad Mohanty, Mr. Trilochan Mishra and Mr. Qamruddin Khan treated me as almost a member of their family. Mr. Nanda Kishore Mishra was very kind to me as was Mr. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty and Mr. Deba Prasad Pattanaik, who left the department and went to America for research, when I was doing my Masters. In long and frequent interactions with Trilochan Babu and Harendra Babu, I learnt a lot, on literature and life both.

Came the time for the final examination and I realized that I wasn't prepared for it. I thought of writing it the following year. I sought Harendra Babu's advice. He just wouldn't hear of it. If I got an average second class, he said, I would get a lecturer's post in a Government college. He told me that I had the responsibility of helping my father. So I wrote the examination and the result, which was above the anxiety-level – a "high second class" in the terminology of those days, disappointed those of my teachers who loved me most. But they didn't give up on me. I left the College with their blessings.

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Excerpts from *The Red Fort of Learning*

Mr. Ramesh Mohanty
B.A.: 1961-63, M.A.: 1963-65

I went back to the Ravenshaw College not with a feeling of awe as I did before, but with a feeling of home coming. I had made enough friends during the two years I studied Science to miss them sorely in my village. I met Alekh and Gyana and our old friendship was fully revived. I got a seat in the New Hostel which had just come up on the southern end of the play ground. Fortunately for me, most of my friends including Sudhansu Babu, Surendra Babu and Alekh, who were pursuing Post Graduate studies in the College, were staying in this hostel.

The Department of English is one of the oldest departments of the College and has a rich tradition of academic culture and excellence. It can boast of a succession of dedicated professors, readers and lecturers who could be judged among the best anywhere in the country. It was headed by Dr. A. P. O'Brien whom I had already known as the Superintendent of the East Hostel. Trilochan Mishra, a Reader at that time, was an outstanding scholar who taught us the Shakespearian tragedies. He would not merely teach, he would act out each role as if he was on the stage actually acting. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty, one of the young lecturers, taught us modern poetry. He took particular interest in guiding us and providing us with the latest books of literary criticism. Deba Prasad Patnaik, another young lecturer, was dashing and flamboyant and it became difficult at times to know on what topic he was actually lecturing. For him, literature was not an isolated subject confined to what a particular writer has said. It has to be related with other subjects. To understand T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, he would say, you have to have a fair understanding of modern and ancient history, psychology and philosophy——both Eastern and Western. He was not wide of the mark. Literature is not insular; it embraces all that concerns life.

Quite a good number of brilliant students had joined the English Honors course that year. Almost half a dozen were from among the best ten pass-outs of the Arts stream. There was a girl who had stood second among the best ten in the Science stream. She was KananBala Tripathy, daughter of Dr. Kunja Bhari Tripathy, Professor of Oriya. Two of us were from the senior batch who had lost a year—Samar Ballav

Mohapatra and me. Ganeshwar Mishra came from the S. C. S. College, Puri, and Prafulla Kumar Mishra from Dhenkanal College and they were both high up in the merit list. The boy who was second in the list in Arts, Prafulla Kumar Jagadev, was with us. Two other names that I could remember are Satya Shankar Mishra and Shyam Sundar Mohapatra, both from the Ravenshaw College with high positions in the merit list.

Dr. O'Brien, while taking his first class with us, enquired why so many good students who could have done well in other subjects, have chosen to study English Literature. All of us, except Samar Ballav Mohapatra who said he aims at joining the I.A.S., had one reply: we would like to be lecturers in colleges and it is easier to get a lectureship in English than in other subjects. It was well known that there was a dearth of English lecturers in the government colleges and one with a second class in M.A. is sure to land on one instantaneously. Dr. O' Brien smiled wryly and wondered how many of us would qualify with a second class. When it comes to awarding first class in B.A.(Hons) or M.A., the Utkal University had perhaps the poorest record of all the universities existing then. Till our time, it produced only one first class in M.A. and two in B.A. (Hons). Are we going to be satisfied with a second class if at all that comes our way? Of course, we knew that reality and expected nothing more. Our ambition was humble and confined to bread-earning. Even in the profession of teaching, we did not aspire to become professors or go abroad for a doctoral degree. Those days, doing a doctorate in English in India was unheard of.

When the result of the B.A (Hons) final came out, it was a big surprise for us. Samar BallavMohaptra and I got first class with first and second position respectively. Others got second class and the most aggrieved of them was KananBala Tripathy who legitimately expected a first class, if not the first position. The mild and suave Ganeshwar Mishra would not say it, but he felt deprived of his due. So did Satya Shankar Mishra and Prafulla Jagadev. All of them were, indeed, deserving of first class considering their merit and effort, but the conservative University was not prepared to recognize it. These days, I am told, first class in English is a dime a dozen and with proliferation of universities, there is competition among them as to the number of first class awarded.

I had a few close friends studying other disciplines. Laxmidhar Mishra who had stood first both in High School and Intermediate in Arts final had joined Political Science Honors. He was a little older in age and had to take the Civil Services examination along with his B.A. examination the same year. The fact that he got selected for the I.A.S. within best twenty and also stood first in first class in B.A.(Hons) is a testimony

to his extraordinary merit and perseverance. Had he missed it, he would have to be contented with a lectureship. But what really amazed me was his self confidence and tenacity. Placed in his position, I would have probably chosen to join Medicine or Engineering. Laxmidhar would have been satisfied with nothing less than the I.A.S., not so much for its glamour and exclusiveness though that did count, but for the sheer joy of accomplishing the impossible.

Surendranath Mishra, my guide and mentor, stood first in Second Class—nobody got first class in M.A. English that year— and joined the I.A.S.. He was just following the footsteps of his illustrious brother-in-law, Ramakant Rath, who had already become famous as a poet in Oriya by the time he joined the I.A.S. Away in Mussourie under training, Surendra Babu continued to guide me through letters. I always felt I owed my first class in B.A. and M.A. to him. I can also never forget his magnanimity towards me. When he came to know that I was going to give coaching to earn some money as my stipend was not sufficient, he started sending me a hundred rupees every month till I joined the State Bank of India as a Probationary Officer. Mahendranath Mishra, his elder brother who was in the O.A.S., then posted as Charge Officer in the Board of Revenue, Cuttack, would come to my hostel to deliver it regularly. A hundred rupees in 1963 was a huge amount and I must humbly acknowledge I remain indebted to him. I could have paid back the money, but I never dared to do that; how can I pay back my elder brother and how can I pay back his magnanimity, his affection?

The year 1962 is memorable in our history for the miserable defeat we suffered at the hands of the Chinese army on the northern border. The whole nation, especially the youth, got a shock as never before. It was naturally more felt in the colleges and universities where the youth did not merely react, but wanted to act. There was a flurry of activities in collection of contribution to the war fund and donation of blood for the injured soldiers. The girls donated their jewellery. Some boys opted for the Short Service Commission offered by the Army. There was grief, there was shame, but there was no panic, no fear of the Chinese overrunning us. In the meetings held on the tennis court, the cry was loud and clear, "we will fight to the last man; we will not surrender." A patriotic fervour pervaded the whole atmosphere. A local battalion of Orissa Military Police, as it was called then, housed next to our college, was moving to the war field in Assam. I remember the huge crowd that gathered at the railway platform at Cuttack to bid them farewell. The whole of the College was there with the girls doing traditional garlanding and lamp waving. It was as if we are sending our heroes to the battlefield to vanquish the enemy. I felt our defeat has turned into victory because of the sense of

patriotism and unity it generated throughout the country. I cannot forget my own act of cowardice though.

Following the Chinese aggression, the government ordered compulsory enrolment in the National Cadet Corp in the colleges with immediate effect. We were asked to collect forms from the N.C.C. office inside the college campus and apply by a certain date. Failure to do so would disqualify us from appearing in the final University examination. I was completely upset as I could not think of joining any organization that had anything to do with military activities. One would naturally wonder how I joined the I.P.S. I shall answer that question later. I did not play any games nor even listened to commentary on cricket matches which most of my friends did. The only form of exercise I loved and practiced was long walks for long hours without being fatigued. I contacted some like-minded boys to find a way out. Bibudhendra Narayan Patnaik, a senior class English Honours student, had already found it. One can seek exemption on ground of poor health. I had had my medical reports pertaining to the attack of typhoid and prolonged hospitalization. It worked. I consoled myself with the fact that I did not have to procure a false medical certificate to obtain exemption. Bibudhendra argued that compulsory N.C.C. training amounts to conscription and conscription is a breach of our fundamental right to the choice of profession. He said he was prepared to go to the High Court in a writ petition. My argument was that to be battle-trained is not the only way to be battle-ready. To run the civil society efficiently while the battle is on is equally important. But now I have no hesitation to admit that it was sheer cowardice that led me to seek exemption.

The last two years in the Ravenshaw College constituted a watershed in my life. There comes a time when one stands on a crossroad unable to decide which direction to take. One might have some hazy idea as to what one can expect from each of the roads lying before one, but it is not sufficient to make a choice. Finally, one has to make a blind move on the basis of probabilities only to find much later whether one is on the right or the wrong path. If it turns out to be wrong, it is too late to retrace your steps. You might call it your destiny to shift the responsibility of wrong choice from your shoulders, but you are going to go through it; none else.

The summer vacation that followed my B.A. final examination in 1963 was long, hot and tortuous. I had stopped visiting my village in vacations since 1961 when I left for the college. Our home used to be cool in summer thanks to the mango grove, coconut orchard and the pond encircling it. I missed it, but did not regret as I had to

prepare for a number of competitive examinations for jobs. The first class in B.A. had upset my set goal for teaching. Surendranath Mishra, my mentor, had joined the Life Insurance Corporation of India as an Administrative Officer while waiting for the result of the I.A.S. One cannot be sure of success by taking just one test. One has to try many to be sure of at least one. The only exception was Laxmidhar Mishra who tried only one test—the I.A.S.— and cracked it. But not all of us could be Lxmidhar Mishras.

At that time I came across an advertisement in the newspaper for recruitment of probationary officers in the State Bank of India. I applied for it and soon found out that quite a number of senior boys have also applied. We proceeded together to Calcutta for appearing in the written test at the S.B.I. office in Strand Road. One of us had the experience of trying for it the year before unsuccessfully. He led us to a hotel in Netaji Subhas Bose Road called the Tower Lodge which was affordable and was staffed with Oriya cooks and bearers. I remember the tariff for the room was eight rupees, but I fail to recollect the cost of food which was delicious and homely. Out of the group, I was the only one to be called for the *viva voce* and to be selected.

Back at Cuttack, I found there was another call waiting for me. It was for the post of Senior Management Trainee in Delhi Cloth and General Mills with a lucrative salary of fourteen hundred rupees to start with. I had applied very casually without the least hope of success. The advertisement said first class graduates in any subject are eligible and first class train fare along with hotel charges will be paid to those called. I decided to attend. This time I did not go to the Tower Lodge and checked into a hotel called the Nataraj at Howrah charging fifty rupees a day. I could have stayed in a still better hotel as the other candidates did, but I had no idea about the amount admissible. I had to stay there for three days. The written test and the interview took place in the conference hall of the Bharat Electronics at Gariahat. There were about twenty-five candidates and some of them had M.B.A. degree from abroad. I was the only one from Orissa. There was a girl named Linyasoka Dey who had been educated in Orissa up to high school. Her father was a civil engineer in the service of the Government of Orissa working as Executive Engineer, Angul, when he quit his job and returned to Calcutta to have his own construction company. She did her M.A. in Geography from the Allahabad University and was teaching in the Lucknow University.

There was a team of officers from the Delhi Cloth Mills headed by Mr. Gidwani, the Chief of Personnel. The test started with a group discussion on the topic which I recollect to be something like "In Indian Industry, should the Private Sector and the

Public Sector co-exist or One should give way to the Other?" All the candidates were seated around an oval table and asked to express their opinion with reason. The discussion was free; there was no time limit or sequence. Anyone could start the talk and anyone could take over. Anyone can intervene and put forth his point of view. When there was a scramble for starting, Linyasoka Dey was heard speaking and others withdrew. She spoke clearly and emphatically that in a democracy the State has to exercise control over the industry to secure social justice, but not engage in business or industrial activity. She pleaded for privatization of the existing public sector industries citing example of those turned sick. Others spoke of a healthy competition between both the Sectors. Since I did not have a stake in the result, I became reckless and stated that healthy competition between the two sectors is not possible and the private sector should give way to the public sector to fulfil the State's goal of achieving a socialistic pattern of society. There were loud protests as I expected. But I continued to defend my point of view by stating that the best form of economy in a democracy is a State controlled one. The discussion went on after a working lunch served in an adjoining room. The final opinion adopted by the group collectively was that both the Sectors should co-exist.

Next day there was a written examination with three papers—General Knowledge, English Essay and Comprehension and Indian Economy and Accountancy. The last paper was beyond my comprehension and I made a feeble attempt to answer some from commonsense. On the third day, only seven candidates were called for an interview and, to my utter surprise, I was one. The interview taken by Mr. Gidwani and two others was formal. I was told I would soon receive the letter to join at Delhi for a month and then proceed to Bombay where I would be assigned duty as an understudy in the Mill at Thane. The receptionist handed over an envelope containing a cheque for an amount more than three times the amount I had actually spent.

The reason I cited the details of the interview is to highlight the objective manner of recruitment followed by one of the biggest of the private sector companies at that time. My background was humble; except for a bright educational career, I had nothing to justify my selection. I had no idea of business or commerce and business management was a branch of study then not heard of. Nor did I come out of an elite college or university where the private sector goes scouting for their future managers. Probably they saw in me the material that can be shaped as per their need. The process was almost repeated during my selection for the State Bank of India which I shall relate later.

Meanwhile, I got myself admitted to the first year M.A. Course in my old alma mater. Samar Ballav Mohapatra left for the Delhi University in pursuit of his ultimate goal of joining the I.A.S. and he achieved it with flying colours—secured third place in the All India List. Kanan Bala Tripathy continued to study, but got married to an I.P.S. officer of the Assam Cadre and left. Prafulla Jagadev, the moving spirit Ariel of the batch, left to do Bachelor in Education in the Teachers' Training College standing on the bank of the River Kathjori in an idyllic location. Shyam Sundar Mohapatra went to the hallowed university called Vishwa Bharati founded by Rabindranath Tagore to study M.A. in Oriya Literature at Shanti Niketan. The rest of the Honours boys stuck to the Ravenshaw College. There were, of course, many new faces. The number of seats for M.A. was quite high inviting B.A. pass students and some students from other disciplines into the fold. Debabrat Mishra came from Physics Hons. and Raj Kishore Mishra from Sanskrit Hons. Quite a number of new comers were working as clerks in government offices and left their job to study M.A. with the hope of getting lectureship in private colleges even with a third class. The education scene in Orissa—in fact, in the country—was undergoing a sea-change with the mushrooming of private colleges which were needed to meet the demand of a burgeoning population. Each new college needed at least two lecturers in English. Almost all my classmates in M.A. who got third class were engaged in private colleges as lecturers.

The Department of English had acquired a new look after Dr. Prafulla Kumar Pati joined as Professor and Head of the Department in place of Dr. A. P. O'Brien who had retired. Prof. Pati had gone to a famous university in the USA—Yale University if I remember correctly—to do his Ph.D. On return, he tried to reform the department on the model of the American university. The contact between the students and teachers became friendly and informal. Prof. Pati was staying in a bungalow near the New Hostel where I stayed. I used to walk into his house anytime I wanted. I needed advice from him on preparing for the English papers in the I.A.S. exam as well as on personal matters which he gave ungrudgingly. Sometimes I wondered if I was taking advantage of his offer of free interaction too much. But I never noticed anything but cordial reception on my visits.

Dr. Pati taught us Hemingway and Jane Austen. He was also giving lectures on Dickens and Hardy. His emphasis was on simple, direct and clear expression. Trilochan Mishra continued to teach us Shakespearian tragedies. I could still hear his staccato voice reciting lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello*. He was always on his feet while teaching as if staging a one man play. We had a new teacher who came on transfer

from the S. C. S. College, Puri. Khitish Candra Dev was very soft-spoken, eloquent and punctilious. He was a proponent of Queen's English with correct accent. He would turn up in the college every day in an immaculate suit and tie. In the evening he would be seen taking a walk in the College ground in spotless white *dhoti* and *kurta* with a stick in hand – an unmistakable Bengali *bhadralok*.

Around this time, I got the call to attend the *viva voce* test for selection of probationary officers of the State Bank of India at Calcutta. I was to go alone this time as none of the friends who had gone with me for the written examination had qualified. One of them, Amulya Kumar Patnaik, had stood first in the Orissa Administrative Service examination and also qualified for the I.P.S. He joined the I.P.S. in 1964, a year before I did. Another, my classmate Debaraj Tripathy, who had stood first in first class in Economics Hons., had joined the Punjab National Bank as a probationary officer at Calcutta. He was staying in a rented house at Kidderpore and had left his address with me with an invitation to stay with him while visiting for the interview.

Three days before the date for the test, I boarded the Puri Express at night and arrived at Howrah early next morning. To my great exasperation, I did not find a single cab outside. There were no buses either. On enquiry I learnt there was an anti-Hindi agitation in the city paralyzing all transport services and vandalizing cinema houses running Hindi movies. I came back to the first class waiting room for my morning ablutions. As I was proceeding to the restaurant for breakfast, I heard a man speaking in Oriya to a man who was boarding a train. I thought he could give me some information about resumption of taxi services or availability of some other mode of transport to Khidderpore. To my surprise, he turned out to be a taxi driver – one Giri from Balasore (I feel so sad that I have forgotten his first name) – who stays in Kidderpore. He had come the night before with passengers and was held up. He said the police have already announced that cabs can start plying and he was about to start. I told him I would pay him the full fare and he need not have other passengers. He said he was not waiting for other passengers; he was only waiting for clearance from the police. By the time we started, it was midday. When we reached my friend's place, we found the room locked. Obviously, he had left for the bank and will not return before evening. I asked Giri to take me to a nearby hotel and drop me there. But he had a suggestion:

"I stay alone in a rented room very close by. Why not come with me and rest for an hour or two under the fan? I can get you a decent vegetarian lunch from the South Indian restaurant and drop you at your friend's place in the evening."

I told him I didn't want to give him any trouble. Actually, I had the fear of being robbed or even murdered by this man who was completely unknown to me. Such crimes are not uncommon in a city like Calcutta. The only thing I knew about him was that he was an Oriya taxi driver from Balasore, but that was not enough credential to trust him. Moreover, I wondered why he was forcing me to go to his room? There would be none to come to my rescue if I was attacked. No, I would not commit such a folly.

"The nearest hotel where you can stay is in Howrah. I am not sure if I can drive you there. Did you not notice the procession of agitators chased by the police on our way? Why take such risk?" he said.

At this I really panicked. I would rather take the risk of spending a few hours in this man's room than drive through a violent procession. I told him, "Let us go to your place."

It was only five minutes' drive. The place looked like an improved kind of slum with a row of brick made huts having the facility of power and water. He parked his taxi and carried my bag. I followed him. He unlocked the door and asked me to wait for a few minutes. He went inside and spread a clean sheet on the bed and turned on the fan. Then he asked me to lie down and relax till he brought me my lunch. When I offered money, he said he would take it at one time. I sat on the bed and waited cursing my luck for placing me in such a predicament. He was back in an hour with a lunch pack and sal leaf plates and a bottle of mineral water. He laid the lunch neatly on the floor beside a folded mat. I sat cross-legged and took the hot meal with relish. The South Indian meal with its *sambar* and *halwa* was really delicious. The man went out advising me to lie down and take a nap for an hour. I lay on the bed without trying to sleep and wondered what next.

Giri waked me up at six. I did not know that I had fallen soundly asleep. He carried my bag and drove to my friend's place. Debaraj was waiting at the gate, tense and worried. Just imagine the times when there was no internet and cell phone. Even the landlines were few and erratic. When he saw the taxi stop, he rushed, happy to see me safe and sound. I told him briefly what had happened and turned to Giri to pay him and thank him. But he would not take the money. Didn't I need his services to go to the S.B.I. office at Strand Road which area he was familiar with? How should I go to Howrah to catch the train back home? Debaraj agreed. I needed his services during my stay.

Giri came on time to take me to the S.B.I. office and then back after my interview was over. We had turned trusted friends by now. After he dropped me at Howrah station to board the Puri Express, I asked him how much I owed him.

"Nothing," he said, "you were my guest."

"No, no. I cannot go back without paying you." I pulled out fiveone-hundred-rupee notes from my wallet and tried to thrust them into his hands.

"You will pay me on your next visit when you come here as a Bank Officer. Just inform your friend and I shall be at the station," he said and drove away.

I never met him again and remained indebted to him for life. Again, how do I pay back such cordiality from a fellow Oriya in the city of Oriya baiters?

As I was waiting to be called for the interview, I saw other candidates busy making the lastminute preparation. Some were reading books and some magazines for general knowledge. I had nothing with me except the certificates I was asked to carry. I picked up a copy of the Statesman lying on the table to beat the anxiety caused by waiting. But I was not nervous. When I was called, I went in, wished the Chairman and the members and took my seat. There were six members including the Chairman sitting in a semi-circle by a large oval table. I did not know any of them either by name or designation. I had heard from the receptionist while waiting at the reception that the Chairman was an ex-ICS officer who was Secretary to the Government of India in the Finance Ministry.

The Chairman started by asking,

"You are a first class Graduate in English, Mr. Mohanty. How would you like banking?"

It was a question I was expecting. I told him that I had studied Science and Mathematics in my pre-graduation level and that I would learn banking while working. He handed me over to others who asked me questions about politics in Orissa, the role of Biju Patnaik in modernizing the state, the reason for Biju Patnaik being replaced by Biren Mitra as Chief Minister, so on and so forth. The Chairman was also intervening in the discussion with interest. Later on, I learnt that he was Chief Secretary, Orissa, before moving to the Centre as Secretary. The last question was from him and that unnerved me.

"Mr. Mohanty, I am going to ask you a very sensitive question. But answer freely. Do not have any hesitation and give your frank opinion. You know there is a sizeable Bengali and Bihari population in Orissa. The Oriyas hate both the communities. You know that is something very well known and you cannot deny it. Could you tell me whom they hate more – Biharis or Bengalis – and why?"

I was aghast. Should such a question be asked in an interview for a high level recruitment? Was it the way to eliminate me? I did not know what community the Chairman and other Members belonged to. I mustered the courage to say,

"Sir, shall I have to answer such a question?"

"You may not if you do not want to. But I assure you your answer will have nothing to do with your selection. We have already given you your rating."

"Do you really want me to answer that question frankly and truthfully, Sir?"

"Of course. I just wanted to know the ground reality."

"Sir, the Oriyas hate both the Bengalis and Biharis because they perceive them as exploiters. But they hate the Bengalis more than the Biharis because the Bengalis treat Oriyas as an inferior race and Oriya as a dialect of Bengali language while Biharis join the mainstream and speak chaste Oriya."

There was an uproarious laughter across the table. The Chairman was thumping the table unable to speak. I was simply watching them foolishly. When the wave of laughter died down, the Chairman said,

"Thank you, Mr. Mohanty, you can go. And let me assure you again your reply will not influence our decision to your disadvantage."

I walked out puzzled not knowing what it all meant. It was only when I received the letter of appointment posting me to the Jamshedpur Branch of the S.B.I. as a Probationary Officer that I knew he meant what he said.

THE COLLEGE IN A FERMENT – STUDENTS' AGITATION 1964.

Puri Express reached the Cuttack Station early in the morning. I got down from my comfortable first class compartment in which I was travelling alone and walked out of the platform to take the railway colony lane to reach the East Hostel gate. Outside the Station, I found brickbats and stone pieces strewn on the road. At the gate, I found a posse of policemen armed with lathis standing guard. There were more armed police at the College gate and inside the College on the tennis court. The police guard barred my entry saying that nobody is allowed to go inside. All that I could gather from them was that a clash has taken place between the students and the police and that all the gates have been closed. Knowing that argument with them was of no use, I walked up to the wicket gate at the N.C.C. barrack and got inside. As I walked to my hostel through

the play ground alongside the Commerce Block and the Women's Hostel, I found the entire area disturbed as if a battle had just been fought. There were brickbats everywhere. Some torn shirts, trousers and chappals were lying here and there. I could feel the faint smell of tear gas used by the police still in the air. Something grave had happened. I would soon learn the details from the gate keeper and friends.

There was an altercation between a boarder of the West Hostel and a radio set repairer at the Station Bazar close to the railway station in the very evening I was leaving for Calcutta. The boy alleged assault by the shop owner and came back bleeding to the hostel. The other boarders saw his injury and got agitated. They collected in a group and proceeded to the shop to confront the owner. The shopkeepers of the bazar had also collected anticipating the move by the students. Both the groups clashed and there was free exchange of brickbats and stones. The students alleged that the bazar brats used lathis to hit them. The news soon reached other hostels by word of mouth and the gathering of students began to swell. Apprehending ransacking of shops, the shopkeepers employed goons with weapons like knives and bicycle chains. In response, the students allegedly set fire to the radio shop. That was the time when the police arrived.

The police tried to disperse the crowd by using tear gas which rarely succeeds. Then they resorted to lathi-charge chasing the boys into the college campus. The retreating boys answered by pelting whatever missile they could procure – stones, bricks, boulders, shoes and chappals. The policemen got inside the college firing tear gas shells at the hostel windows. The battle continued throughout the night till the next day when the police made a number of arrests. This provoked the students further and they gathered in strength in front of the college and moved into the streets. A huge assembly of the students at the College Square around the traffic post was mercilessly beaten up by the police and a large number of arrests were made. This escalated the agitation and students of all other colleges of Cuttack including the S.C.B. Medical College and Madhu Sudan Law College came out in procession to protest police action. This was the beginning of the Statewide Students Movement that toppled the government of Chief Minister Biren Mitra.

The fallout of the movement for the student community was disastrous. All the institutions of learning – schools, colleges including medical and engineering colleges, UtkalUnivesity at Vani Vihar – were closed for months together. We were directed to vacate the hostel and when we resisted, armed police was brought in to force us out.

There was a public meeting organized by the government near Shahid Bhavan beside the Chandan Tank to be addressed by Biju Patnaik and Biren Mitra. A large crowd of students suddenly appeared and attacked the leaders on the podium. It was alleged that Bhagabat Behera, the President of the Ravenshaw College Union and the all Orissa leader of the movement, along with his group, manhandled Biju Patnaik and other leaders. This led to a severe lathi charge by the police under the personal supervision of B. K. Mohapatra, Superintendent of Police, Cuttack. A company of Bihar Military Police, known for its ruthlessness, was unleashed to prowl on the students. As a result, many students as well as members of the public were severely injured. Some people jumped into the tank to escape the beating. I was present at the meeting place, but was pulled away by Ranjit Mohanty, Barrister, a prominent Advocate of the Orissa High Court, when the trouble started. I had just moved into a Mess by the side of the Barrister's residence and had picked up acquaintance with him.

This incident inflamed the students all over the state. Political leaders opposed to the ruling party had already infiltrated the movement through their student wings. The demand was no longer action against police brutality; it turned to resignation of the Biren Mitra government. The situation became so grave that Guljarilal Nanda, the Home Minister of India, came down and addressed a meeting of the students on the tennis court of the Ravenshaw College. But it failed to douse the agitation. Only when Biren Mitra resigned, there were signs of normalcy returning.

Almost half of the academic year had been lost by this time. The two top leaders of the agitation, Bhagabat Behera and Trilochan Kanungo, were in touch with me as both of them used to seek my advice on the course of action they should adopt. I advised them to bring the agitation to an end so that one academic year is not fully lost. Prof. Prafulla Kumar Pati had been active in persuading the students to return to the class room. There was an unofficial committee of professors formed by him to further this task. I once took Bhagabat Behera with me to Prof. Pati who made an impassioned appeal to him not to do further harm to the student community.

I had moved to a Mess in Nim Chauri near the High Court where my friend Alekh had a room. There was no knowing how long the hostel would remain closed. On the insistence of my friend Gyana, I had applied for the I.A.S. and was preparing for the written examination in a half-hearted manner. At that time, one could avail only two chances and the maximum age limit was twenty four. I had just two chances to avail including this one. I should avail it, Gyana argued, even if I fail to succeed as it

would be lost in any case. The papers I offered were English Literature (higher and lower), European History (higher), British History and World History (lower). Surendranath Mishra, my mentor, had offered these papers and I was simply following him. He had one advantage over me – age; unlike him I had to take the examination before passing M.A. I was not surprised that I qualified only for the I.P.S. and Central Services. There were two reasons for my laxity in preparation – paucity of time for a vast course of study and the two jobs of comparable financial compensation already at hand. There was also the question of taking the final M.A. examination and I had almost decided not to take it.

After the agitation was called off, the college and the hostel reopened. Normalcy returned to the entire state. I returned to my single seated room in the second floor of the New Hostel where I was most at home. I have already been there for three years. I have been attending classes mostly because I did not want to miss the lectures by Prof. Pati and Trilochan Mishra. Manoranjan Hota who had just been appointed a lecturer was taking some classes on post-war poetry. I attended a few out of curiosity to know how he was teaching. He joined the State Bank as a probationary officer after a month or two. Deba Prasad Patnaik had just returned from London where he had been on a Colombo Plan fellowship. His talks on life in London were more interesting than his lectures on T. S. Eliot with whom he claimed to have had an interview. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty was bracing up to proceed to London on the same fellowship and the gossip in the corridors of the Department was that he was taking water-soaked rice with spoon and fork to practice using them there.

One evening, to my great astonishment, Prof. Prafulla Pati walked into my room in the hostel. I had already had my dinner and was writing a dissertation on Dickens for the seminar. I offered him my chair and he took his seat asking me to sit on the bed.

"Ramesh, have you received your letter of appointment from the State Bank?"

"Yes sir, I have been posted to Jamshedpur with the direction to join within one month."

"What did you do about the offer of the Delhi Cloth Mills?"

"That I have already declined."

"That appears to be the right decision. You are never sure about your fate in a private company. The State Bank is as good as the government in the matter of security of job. I hope you are preparing seriously for your M.A. exam."

"I am attending classes, sir, but have no plan to take the exam."

"I heard it from Ganeshwar and came to advise you not to commit that mistake. What are you afraid of? You may not get a first class? Well, you may not, but how does it matter when you would not be teaching? "

"It's not that, sir. I have to join the Bank within one month."

"That's not going to stand in your way. You can come on one month's leave to take the exam. But do one thing; write to the S.B.I. to post you at Cuttack for this purpose. I shall give you a letter of recommendation which you can enclose."

I agreed and thanked him and walked with him up to the gate of his bungalow.

I do not remember why I failed to collect the letter of recommendation from Prof. Pati, but I carried out his advice and wrote a hand written letter to the Secretary and Treasurer of the S.B.I. who had sent me the letter of appointment. Within a week, I received a fresh letter of appointment posting me to S.B.I., Cuttack. I also received a letter from Mr. Bhattacharya, Agent, S.B.I., Cuttack, Naya Sarak, welcoming me to the Branch and asking me to inform when I intended to join. The next day, which was 1st. October, 1964, I appeared at the Branch with a medical certificate issued by the Civil Surgeon, Cuttack, and reported my joining. Right from that moment, I was given a cubicle near the Agent's chamber where I sat and worked till the end of June, 1965, with a month's leave in May to take the M.A. examination.

It was in February, 1965, that I was called for the *Viva Voce* examination for the I.P.S. and the Central Services at Calcutta. Strangely enough, I have no recollection of where I stayed and where the examination took place though the details of the interview are fresh in my memory. The medical test was held in some hospital which also I do not remember. I cannot find the reason for such partial amnesia. There is a faint recollection that I went to the Writers Building, the West Bengal Secretariat, along with GirijaBhusan Mishra, a candidate from Orissa, to see an official of the Directorate of Health in connection with the test. Girija had done his M.A. in English from the Allahabad University and was very keen to join the I.P.S. To his ill luck, he was found to be color blind and was disqualified for the I.P.S. He joined the Indian Postal Service. It must have been a great satisfaction for him that his younger brother, Uma Shankar Mishra, joined the I.P.S. a few years later and proved to be a successful officer rising to be the Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, the only Oriya officer to achieve this distinction.

My *viva voce* test at Calcutta went off very well. The Board consisted of three or four members headed by Mr. Lahiri, Inspector General of Police, Assam, who had just retired. Perhaps he belonged to the IP. All the members were cordial and all the questions asked were from English Literature, history and politics. Mr. Lahiri was perhaps a student of English. He started from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and ended with T. S. Eliot's Waste Land traversing through Shakespeare, Milton and Tennyson. I had taken him to be a Professor of English. It was only after the interview that I learnt from GirijaBhusan Mishra that he was Inspector General of Police, Assam. I had secured sixty five percent of marks, perhaps the highest awarded by that Board that year.

Before I end this chapter on my alma mater where I spent six eventful years culminating in the acquisition of a source of livelihood and a way of life, I would say that I wrote it with a feeling of gratitude for all I came in contact with – friends, professors, officials, hostel employees, cooks and ward boys. Most of my professors with whom I continued to have occasional interaction – Prof. Prafulla Pati, Trilochan Mishra, Jatindra Mohan Mohanty – are no more. Even some of my most cherished friends have left the world. Ganeshwar Mishra who had done his Ph.D. from the Kent University, U.K., taught in the Utkal University as Professor and Head and became President of the Orissa Sahitya Academy after retirement. This honour goes to an eminent author in Oriya which he was widely acknowledged to be. He died of cancer after prolonged and painful suffering. What is more tragic is that his eldest son, a brilliant journalist with the Times of India, had died of cancer at the age of forty a few years before his death. Prafulla Jagadev was constantly in touch with me persuading me to write whatever I liked and in whichever language I liked. He published one of my collections of short stories in Oriya. It was a massive heart attack that took his life before he retired. His dream of establishing a world class university for Oriya language and Literature remained unfulfilled.

Prof. Trilochan Mishra died at the age of ninety-one at his residence in Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar. I had visited him long back along with Ganeshwar Mishra and Prafulla Jagadev at an extremely tragic moment of his life. His eldest son, Ashok, a young I.A.S. officer of the Punjab cadre, was brutally murdered by the terrorists while travelling in his car in Patiala. Prof. Mishra had been in a state of shock for months. When he saw me, he broke down and started crying loudly with tears running down from his eyes like torrents of monsoon rain. It took an hour for him to calm down when he said, "You are my son too." I made it a point to see him regularly thenceforward.

Unfortunately, I could not see him at his death bed as I was then in the USA with my daughter.

Prof. Prafulla Kumar Pati once turned up in my office in 1971 when I was Additional S.P., Puri. His son, who had stood first in first class in M.A., Economics, was selected as a Probationary Officer in the S.B.I. There was some delay in police verification causing delay in the issue of his letter of appointment. Prof. Pati came to see me seeking my help. A telephone call from him would have been good enough for me to get it done, but he said he took this opportunity to meet me. I was always aware of his warm feelings for me. I contacted the officer concerned and got the report sent. Prof. Pati reminded me of his advice to me at the time of my joining the S.B.I. I sought posting at Cuttack and got it. I told him, "Sir, I have a bit of advice for your son. Such a bright scholar like him should be in the I.A.S." He smiled and said he would covey it to his son, but was not sure if he would agree to take the trouble. Probably he did not. The last I heard of his son was that he has retired from the S.B.I. as a very senior officer.

Prof. Pati was Member, Orissa Public Service Commission when I was S.P. Special Branch. N. K. Ray was the Chairman of the Commission. I had many occasions to meet him at that time. After the completion of his term, he went back to his hometown, Sambalpur, and served as Vice Chancellor, Sambalpur University. He was active in public life of Western Orissa till his death.

Prof. Jatindra Mohan Mohanty never missed a chance to meet me whenever and wherever he could. He had read my short stories in Oriya, but never expressed any opinion about their literary value. He was then a well-known critic of modern Oriya literature and I would have valued his opinion greatly. The fact that he never expressed any indicated that he found them pedestrian. It might also be that he did not approve of my writing in Oriya. But he used to tell me that his wife, a Professor in Oriya, liked my stories, particularly my short novel "Kete Dure Krishna" which she got included in the course of study of the students she was teaching. Prof. Mohanty used his good offices to get one of my collections of stories published by a reputed publisher. He continued to urge me to write in English on any matter – fictional or real. He thought I could give a literary shape to the crime stories I investigated. So did Ganeshwar Mishra whose pressure on me was constant. But it did not happen. Perhaps this story of my life I am writing fifteen years after my retirement is the result of the pressure that they had once exerted.

The story of the hoary and hallowed Ravenshaw College of our time will not be complete without the mention of a few illustrious figures who strode its corridors like Colossus. When I came in 1958, Dr. Sadasiv Mishra, Professor of Economics, was the Principal. A thorough Englishman in his look, gait and bearing, he was always impeccably dressed in a suit and tie. He would drive from his bungalow to the College—a distance of hardly five minutes' walk – in his Baby Morris. He was the only Professor owning a car. I heard a joke from the senior friends that while the Principal drove, his peon ran behind the car ready to push if it stopped on the way. The joke is obviously a figment of somebody's imagination. A captivating orator, he could deliver speeches on any subject at any time as the occasion demanded. He had then just returned from the Harvard University, USA and was addressing the students and staff on his experience there. He described the Americans as *Uthanapada* – men with feet raised – implying always ready to work. He also dwelt on the efficacy of their economy based on *laissez faire* citing their air service as an example. There was keen competition ensuring absolute punctuality in flights. But during my many visits to the USA, I found their domestic air service only slightly better than ours. The Americans are probably sliding down while we are going up.

The next Principal was Dr. Banshidhar Samantaray, Professor of Botany, more fastidious in attire and manners than his predecessor. He would turn out from his bungalow in a meticulously pressed suit with a colourful bow tie slowly walking up to the office watching the activities going on in the passing departments. He had taken our first year Botany class in Inter Science. By the time we reach the class, we see him standing beside the table with a pointer in hand. He comes five minutes before time and keeps watching his watch. The minute the class time starts, he gets the door closed and starts his lecture beginning with a line that he often repeats, "When I was in California....". A great stickler for punctuality, he sends professors coming late on a day's leave. Quite a number of errant students were rusticated for misbehaving with members of the staff. He enforced strict discipline in the hostels by ordering locking up of gates at ten in the night. The boarders could no longer visit movie theatres for the late-night show.

The Red Fort of Learning has come a long way. It has become a University with mind boggling expansion in academics. It has also expanded physically with a new campus at Naraj where the Kathjori departs from the Mahanadi. The spot is beautiful like the bejewelled head of a bride, the two rivers flowing down like two strands of her hair. But does it maintain its stature, its grandeur, its excellence? Are there stalwarts

among the Professors to match their predecessors? I had no contact with the college till my two daughters enrolled for their undergraduate and graduate studies. What I noticed was a terrible shock to me. Teachers of all ranks in all subjects were holding their private coaching schools at their residence charging huge sums of money as fee. It was not confined to undergraduate and graduate classes only; even post-graduate students attended private coaching. I heard students saying about their professors that the class rooms are for taking attendance, coaching schools for teaching. But I doubt if any serious teaching was being imparted in the coaching centres either. The teacher had to attend to shifts after shifts to meet the onrush; where is time for him to teach? The emphasis was on securing marks which could be managed without learning.

I expressed my concern to a professor who happened to be a contemporary. He was not given to private coaching, but he defended it.

"Medical College Professors are doing private practice and earning a hundred times more than their pay. Why should College Professors be deprived of it?"

"Well, they have been permitted by the Government."

"The Government should also permit us."

When I complained about the standard of professors, he answered somewhat justifiably:

"How can we have professors of high calibre? Brilliant students like you who ought to teach in the University join the Civil Services, even Banks and Insurance Companies. Can we manufacture them?"

[Shri Ramesh Mohanty is a former I.P.S. Officer who took the Civil Services examination and joined the Indian Police Service in 1965. The same year he was awarded First Class in M.A. with the Gold Medal.]

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Recollections from the Past

Mr. Satyananda Mishra
B.A.: 1965-67, M.A.: 1967-69

Ravenshaw College, now University, conjures up many memories. I entered it in 1965, some 57 years ago. Wonders of modern times that one has survived so long to tell this story. In the pre-university class, I was awed by some of the classmates who dressed smartly and spoke English so very differently from most of us coming from assorted villages of the state. For both economic and social reasons, I wore not so well and spoke with a heavy Odia accent. Not that I speak much better now. To overcome the complex, I decided to opt for alternative English in lieu of Odia. And when the time came to choose a subject for the Honours Class, English Literature was my obvious choice. Membership of the English Department instantly elevated one's status and washed away the rural past in the eyes of both those who came from the Stewart School and those who belonged to Cuttack, Puri, and Bhubaneswar. I laugh at myself that I had valued their opinion so much then. But I have no regrets for choosing English Literature as my Major. I owe it to the English Department of Ravenshaw College and its faculty for my life- long fascination for literature.

Our department had only sixteen seats for the Honours Class. Priyadarshi Dash, Bibhu Padhi, Deba Biswal and Yashodhara Behera were classmates among others. Priyadarshi had topped the Matriculation examination in 1965, a major achievement for school students anytime, and Bibhu was already a budding poet. Yashodhara was an avid reader of P.G. Wodehouse, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy. In later years, both Yashodhara and Bibhu wrote many books and earned a name for themselves as writers and Priyadarshi translated the Sonnets of Shakespeare into Odia, a masterpiece of translation. Deba too had a keen interest in literature although he chose to go into business at the end of his studies. I had no such distinction to boast of like these classmates. I used to argue with everyone to hide my lack of familiarity with the world of English literature and sometimes succeeded on the strength of my memory about a wide variety of information on books and authors I had gathered. In retrospect, I feel I was unkind to my more accomplished classmates.

Soon I took a liking for Shakespeare, Donne, and Keats. Loved to know about the history of the English Literature (Ifor Evans) and the Social History of England (G. M. Trevelyan) and attracted the attention of our teachers. We had many teachers of

distinction. Some of them were good and much ahead for the times in their reading habits and sensibility. Dr. Prafulla Pati was the Head of Department, a small but intimidating person whose presence inside or outside the classroom was generally avoided by most. He was trained in the old tradition. He was very good in the concise and wry manner of his delivery but never managed to convey the romance of literary texts. Prof. Sarweshwar Dash was very emotional and would break into tears often. He taught us *Hairy Ape*, *The Emperor Jones*, and *Desire Under the Elms* by Eugene O'Neill and taught rather well although O'Neill's plays were not exactly to his liking, being laced with strong passions and too much of gloom. Prof. Trilochan Mishra was the acknowledged authority on Shakespeare and made him come alive. He didn't mix around much, not even with the faculty colleagues. Prafulla Mohanty was among the few teachers of the new breed and thought no end of himself for that precise reason. Of course, he was very good in the classroom. I remember Ode to Autumn till this day because of the vividness with which he presented this classic of Keats. Soubhagya Mishra belonged to this younger lot and was very popular for his friendly and youthful manners. He introduced to us latest works of fiction by Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth.

Those two years were intense for me, full of a wide variety of experiences. I came of age, in a manner of speaking. Struck many friendships, some of which have lasted till now. Our seminar classes were really very engaging. When I joined the National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie for training as an I.A.S. probationer a few years later, I found from friends from other universities that our syllabus in English literature was far more contemporary than what they had studied.

I managed to get a second division in the final exams though with distinction. Division or distinction hardly seem important now. But, at that time I felt let down for some time till I moved to Vani Vihar; no one had got a first division there. Priyadarshi, Bibhu and Deba stayed back in Ravenshaw to complete their MA degree.

All this was some fifty - three years ago. Feels like yesterday. I can still feel the feverish atmosphere in the classroom as the teachers entered and opened the books and notes. Everything appeared so new. We hadn't lost all of our innocence. For whatever one has got in this life by way of social status or recognition, those three years in the English Department of the Ravenshaw College had laid the foundation. I take this opportunity to record my gratitude to the Department, our teachers and my class mates for the great affection and kindness they had shared with me.

[Mr. Satyananda Mishra was a member of the Indian Administrative Service and was the Chief Information Commissioner of India. Ravenshaw University has conferred *Honoris Causa* on him.] □

Ravenshaw : My Golden Days

Prof. E. Raja Rao
M.A.: 1967-69

When I introduced myself as a Senior Fulbright Scholar to the Faculty of the Centre for the Studies of Black American Literature and Culture, University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (U.S.), I stated that I had done my Ph.D. on Contemporary African American Fiction under Utkal University, Odisha. During the discussion, a Professor asked me whether I was ever a student of Ravenshaw College, "that great seat of learning famous for its quality education all over the world." I was not only humble enough to reveal that I did my Masters in Ravenshaw College, but was instantly elated along with a sense of pride for my Alma Mater.

I was always conscious of Ravenshaw College that gained distinction amongst all the colleges of Odisha with its unusual brick colour with which it was anointed ever since its creation. With its singularity as the Himalayas of Higher Education in the state of Orissa, it created a halo of its own, seemingly touching the canopy of the blue sky above. Being a marginal of the marginals, I had several Big Brothers both in my life and career. As I entered into the arena of English literature in Ravenshaw College, I discovered one big brother of mine in T. S. Eliot, the towering figure of the Modernist poetry. As I was at once a Teletypist myself serving in the Telegraphs Department of the Central Government of India, and a student of English literature in Ravenshaw College, I was happy with all humility to brush my shoulders with T. S. Eliot, the typist in the beginning of his career. This small similarity with T. S. Eliot packed me with enough confidence to go a long way in the field of literature.

I had mixed feeling towards this great Alma Mater of mine, that is Ravenshaw College, now transformed into a university which it deserved to be so long since. No other Educational Institution which imparted education to me so far was ever a threat to me as Ravenshaw College. My total concentration in my studies coupled with an excellent memory at my command and my cool composure had always given me an upper hand in all the educational institutions like my formative school, N. D. High School, Purushottampur (Ganjam), and Khallikote Evening College, Berhampur, where I always stood first in the Class as a top-ranking student. But as soon as I set my foot in Ravenshaw College, I could feel the ground slipping under my feet.

There were several reasons as to why Ravenshaw College stood as a great mountain before me. Structurally, with its Himalayan stature with many floors and hundreds of rooms all around, studded with an imposing garden in the middle with a constant warning," KEEP OFF THE GRASS", a contribution of a Columbia University Scholar, Prof. BidhuBhusan Das, the then Principal of Ravenshaw College. In the peak hours like 10 am to 11 am, the entry of the students in a mass scale in myriad colours thronging one another in bicycles in the main gate is a scene which has been cherished in my mind as a scene of yesterday. It becomes still more interesting as this melee of students would be almost dashing against the tall-order teachers who were found to be in their midst, distinct by their physical stature and gaudy apparel with candour.

The open ground in the front-end of the huge building of Ravenshaw College had nourished a few small trees which with their thick veils around their hood provided such luxuriant shade that some of the hi-fi students, belonging to I.A.S. and other top-notch bureaucrats asked their vehicles to lay supine under them until their errant escapade from their classes. There were different categories of students inside the class. Once, one of our class teachers asked the students, as a way of introduction of theirs to the rest of the students, about their different tastes and hobbies. Some students said that their hobbies were as varied as reading magazines, newspapers, browsing detective novels, writing poems and short stories, listening to both classical and popular Hindi songs etc. The one who was next to me proudly stood up and came up with a spurt in an Anglicized pronunciation: "Hosreice." The revered teacher had never heard of such a response from any student whatsoever in any of the classes he had so far visited. He was swept off his feet, in a way. Since the answer did not match his expectations, he asked the student again, "What?" The student curbed his tongue with a swish and repeated again in a louder voice, "Hosreice." Thus, the class was full of students with different parts. I was very much hilarious observing the singular pride and over-confidence in some of my classmates. They were very few and far between, but they existed nevertheless. There was a small coterie of students, the full dimension of which I could never locate. At least I could identify two of them who were very much distinct from other students who could be considered compared to them as run-of-the-mill. One of them, for example, would instruct one of his friends at the far end with a top voice, "Find out my notebook in the "*dhabal*" (the wooden box which was used to preserve small tit-bits of the English Seminar Association), and just pass it on to me, also my pen with the blue holder." During the class hours, this boy would note down in his notebook whatever he liked to do, and as soon as his interest in the class began to

flag, he would pass it on back to his friend sitting in a corner, and walk away from the class until the next day. This classmate of mine was not serious to take the Examination either, which, according to him, was just a burden to his talent. When we were still preparing for the examination, he had already become a manager of a private company, and was enjoying power, pelf and position. There were quite a few who like our friend were deliberately revolting against the exams, and, later, were found in public life as leaders of the masses.

I was fortunate to have quite a number of notable teachers in the English faculty of Ravenshaw College. Both their method of teaching, and sometimes their angularities impressed me, so much so that their strength and weakness proved to be veritable assets to my teaching career later. I was impressed by the teachings of such stalwarts like Prof. Prafulla K. Pati, the then Head of the Department of English who always spoke in short sentences and concretized his teaching, Prof. Sarbeswar Das, a man of simplicity and a strict follower of the Gandhian principles, came invariably in "dhoti" and a "pyjama." It was he who always started his lecturer in a feeble voice, but, in course of time, one would feel that the short rivulet with the feeble voice in the beginning of its long journey had taken a turn in course of its flow and had been flowing at a top speed with the noise of gurgling stream. Prof. Biyot Kesh Tripathy, another illustrious teacher who was always into research in different areas of his interest introduced us the use of "cards" to prepare notes and use them for long articles. Prof. Trilochan Mishra who had great flair for acting out Shakeskearean dramas kept the class spell-bound with his histrionics. Prof. Harendranath Mohanty, always attired in a simple white dress, was well-versed with the Seventeenth Century Metaphysical poets like John Donne, Andrew Marvel and others. It was easy for the students to keep pace with his teaching as his speech rhythms very much coincided with the speech rhythm of the vernacular. Of the youngest teachers, Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra was superb. It was easy to be inspired by him as his speech smacked of thoroughness and sincerity of his preparation. With his extraordinary bent of reasoning, he could hammer his point home most convincingly whether the poet is as difficult as T. S. Eliot or W. B. Yeats or Ezra Pound. Prof. Prafulla K. Mohanty was another budding teacher who used to imitate the romantic strain of Keats himself. While he was invoking *Hyperion* into the class room with his power of histrionics, he was able to keep us spellbound. Prof. Paresh Kumar Rout who with his stentorian voice could make Alexander Pope, the master of the eighteenth century poetry iambic pentameters, a poet lilting music. There were other notable teachers like Prof. Qamruddin Khan who later became the Vice Chancellor of Berhampur

University who was teaching us Ernest Hemingway, Prof. D. K. Ray who was teaching was W. B. Yeats, and Prof. Jitendra Narayan Patnaik was teaching Shelley. The weaknesses of my teachers are negligible. Nevertheless, I would like to mention their weaknesses, as they have served a particular purpose in my teaching career. The number of teachers who indulged in this unpleasant game is very few. Nevertheless, like the Gods' sport that sometimes harmed the human beings, their sport in the class room had left a dent in my psyche. I do not know whether others suffered from similar psychic disturbances. As soon as these teachers entered into the class room, they would make the students stand with the question, "Who are the students who have got Honours?" After seeing the beaming faces of the successful students in Honours, then they would target the weaker ones, those who did not have Honours. They would tell them to their faces that if they have chosen English as their subject for their Masters, it is their sheer miscalculation about their career. They would add that, perhaps, they would like to tell their villagers that they were reading English in Ravenshaw College. Then, they would pronounce their Oracle: "You, you and you are sure to get a THIRD Class in Master's Degree which would definitely land you in schools as school teachers." This shocked me so much that whenever I used to lie down in my bed, I used to shed unending tears for some time. But no such thing happened in my case. My hard work won me laurels not only at the end of my studies in Ravenshaw College, but also throughout my teaching career. This division of students between "Honours" and "non-Honours" and the end-results of the classified students was of no consequence. I had seen to my great shock how the classified students "with Honours" got a Third Class Degree in Masters whereas the non-Honours students had passed with flying colours. During my stint in the three premiere institutions like Rajendra College, Bolangir, B. J. B. College, Bhubaneswar and ultimately in Berhampur University, I always cautioned the students that such a classification of "Honours" and "non-Honours" students is a myth, and each category should be conscious of their respective situations. I invariably encouraged the students with non-Honours to be cautious of their disadvantage and put extra labour into their studies and reach their ultimate targets.

There were Seminars in the Department which were held once in a month under the guardianship of the Head of the Department, Prof. P. K. Pati. Prof. Pati was a legendary figure even in those days. He had a charismatic personality with a fine blend of the Eastern and Western qualities. He was well-dressed from head to foot like a perfect European with a well-groomed hair and a decent gentle neck-tie. The only Eastern touch that was found in him was the crumpled shirt which, perhaps, he did not

mind so long as it was well washed. His other Gandhian mark was the use of a simple Raleigh bicycle which was his mode of transport for coming to college. Napoleonic in stature, Prof. Pati was not only impressive, but was a force to reckon with, creating awe and wonder in the students. I was lucky to be in his tutorial class which I invariably attended to get the best of mending and instructions to write English effectively. His words were proverbial for me when once he remarked, 'You are very good so far as the length and breadth of sentences are concerned." That gave me a lot of confidence to go ahead with my writing style which I used confidently while writing my answers in the M.A. Examination. Many students were afraid to go to his tutorial class because he was very stern in his speech if the answers to the questions were tangential in nature. I too shuddered before him, but somehow, I was lucky to satisfy his expectations in my writing,

Witty persons in any land are few and far between. Odisha as far as my knowledge goes has her own share of producing a couple of witty persons who are legendary. The short list to my knowledge that includes the witty persons are Prof. SadisivaMisra, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Utkal University, Prof. Sriram Chandra Dash, President of the All India Political Science Association (1970), and Prof. Prafulla Pati, the then Sonepur Chair Professor of English, Ravenshaw College and later the erstwhile Vice Chancellor, Sambalpur University. The wit of Prof. P. K. Pati was superb. In one of the Seminars in the Department on "New Criticism" which as a theory was very new to the English faculty, then, there was a lot of discussion on the entity of the poem. Prof. Pati made his point when he said that as per New Criticism, the poem once created by its author becomes entirely independent of its creator, and operates on its own. It becomes totally independent of the writer, whatsoever, "period". One of our teachers who was very much knowledgeable and well-informed reiterated all that Prof. Pati had discussed about New Criticism, point by point, and finally hurled at him a pointed question: "All said and done, I do not understand how it can become independent of its creator?" Pat came the answer from Prof. Pati: "Like you," "like you." There was total silence amongst the faculty members for quite some time, not to speak of the students who were totally baffled by such a curt answer. The only noise one could hear was the tinkling noise of tea cups which the bearer of the Department distributed to all the teachers. Later, when I enquired of my friends how that Baconian laconic answer, "Like you," could become the befitting answer to such a loaded question about the place of "Poem" in relation to its author, I learnt that the revered teacher, for some reasons known to him, had of late separated himself from his parents, and had been living independently in another house.

I had earned very few friends in Ravenshaw College as I was at once-a-Day scholar and not a Day scholar of Ravenshaw College. Most of the festivities of the College were performed after the evening. As I was working in the Telegraphs Department of Central Government as a Teletypist, the "night life" of Ravenshaw College was lost to me. Such events as Annual Day Celebration of the English Department and Cultural Seminars and Conferences held in honour of Ravenshaw College which were taking place in the evenings were not available to me, as I had opted, for my own convenience, office hours from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. But I was always attending the College, with no exception, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. I have never missed a single class in all the two years of M.A. Degree. The notable friends who are worth remembering are Mr. Manmath Kundu (who later became Professor of Linguistics and Director of ELTI, Bhubaneswar), Ms. Usha Rani Bhanjababu (Associate Professor in Government Colleges), Mr. Ashok Das Patnaik (Associate Professor in Government Colleges), Mr. Akshyaya Kumar Mishra (Associate Professor in Government College), Mr. Laxmidhar Sahu (Headmaster, Chandikhol Government School) and Mr. Maheshwar Panda (Reader, S. C. S. College, Puri). Of our seniors who were functioning as beacon light were Mr. Subash Pani (who got a First Class in his batch, and also became an I.A.S. after a stint of Lectureship in Vani Vihar, Utkal University), and Mr. Padmalochan Panda who was pouring over books after books overnight, and was always found loitering in the proud Ravenshaw corridors, carrying lots of library books, and Mr. Sanat Das Patnaik who served as Reader in several Government Colleges.

I wish the Souvenir which is being brought out in connection with Ravenshaw College Celebrations would be most successful and would reach out every nook and corner of the State and beyond the State.

[Prof. E. Raja Rao is a Fulbright scholar who became English Professor at Berhampur University in 1993 and superannuated in 2003. He visited Regina, Winnipeg and Paris on post-doc. Prof. Rao is also the Founder President of SALCF. He engages himself in creative writing.]

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Search for Room No. 3

Dr. Ajit Kumar Mukherjee
M.A.: 1968-70

I feel proud to have been a student of English Department of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Room No. 3 (Arts Block on the Ground Floor) was our department. In Ravenshaw, classes were held in the galleries of C.L.T. or P.L.T.; sometimes in the newly constructed Commerce Block. We consider ourselves fortunate that we were taught by the most brilliant teachers of the State. Prof. P. K. Pati was the Professor and the Head. There was a galaxy of other teachers like Prof. Nanda Kishore Mishra, Prof. Soubhagya Mishra, Prof. Jitu Pattnaik, Prof. M. Q. Khan, Prof. Paresh Rout, Prof. D. K. Roy. Students from other departments often told me that our department was the best in Ravenshaw College. Teachers of the Department were often consulted by the Principal in policy matters and whenever there was a crisis in the college.

Prof. P. K. Pati was the Head of the Department. He was a brilliant mind in the country. He had his Ph.D. from Minnesota, USA. He used to speak slowly with pauses. If one wished, one could write everything that he said. I used to do that. He was very simple in his dress. Sometimes, he did not even comb his hair. He wore specks with thick glasses. In informal gatherings, he often spoke tongue in cheek and it was not clear what he meant unless one was fairly good in English.

He began teaching Milton with a statement I haven't forgotten. He said, "Milton was a romantic in spirit, a classicist in form." I used to jot down whatever he said. The note is still there with me. He was the advisor to the College Union. The students were afraid of him for the sharpness of his mind and his straightforward talks. In our final year he taught us Hawthorne. No student could afford to miss his lecture. He taught us the whole of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (all the 12 books, though only Book I and II had been prescribed in the syllabus). He was an asset to the Department and the College. Prof. N. K. Mishra was a Shakespeare-scholar. He never smiled in the class. He taught us comedy while Prof. Sarbeswar Dash taught us Hamlet. Prof. Dash would often ask me about the characters from the works of Tagore and Sarat Chandra, assuming I had read them, being a Bengali. And, I could answer them luckily since I used to be a voracious reader (I still read a lot and that's how I spend my time after retirement). He

was very sincere as a teacher. We all loved him. He would not accept any loose talk or joke. He would cry for the lapses on our part. Once a classmate of mine wrote "I love you" on the blackboard. Prof. Dash came to the class, saw the writing on the blackboard and left in tears. We prostrated before him and apologized to bring him back to the classroom. He used to be full of the feeling of what they say in Odia 'abhiman'. He would sulk like a child on trifles. We were very careful when we spoke to him because nobody knew when he would get hurt and burst into tears but he was so full of love and affection. He was a lovable human being, a true Gandhian in spirit and thought. Prof. Harendra Mohanty taught us Metaphysical poetry. Apparently, he looked as if he had just got up from bed and entered our classroom with the book. He would sit on the high desk chair and start teaching. He never skipped a single word and all those passionate metaphysical lines. His bantering tone was aimed at the disturbing students. He used to engage tutorial classes seriously. I was in his tutorial group. I fondly remember other teachers who were equally sincere and diligent. We used to have annual feast. Who can forget the intelligent jokes and repartee by our Professor Harendra Mohanty?

Now things have changed. Room No. 3 is perhaps not there anymore. It will be unfair on my part not to mention some energetic young teachers like Prof. D.K. Roy, Prof. Mahajiteswar Das, Prof. Soubhagya Mishra. They used to be very spirited about engaging classes. In fact, classes were seldom dropped. I will be failing in my duty if I do not cite one funny incident in my student life. At that time smoking was not banned. On the veranda near Room No. 3, I was smoking and from behind came Prof. Sarbeswar Dash. He caught me red-handed. Before I could do anything, Sir started massaging my chest and asked me not to smoke with the words 'are chhatipodijiba re'. I threw it and promised not to smoke any more. Sorry to inform you that now I smoke three fags a day just to give respect to the nature's call.

Among others I must mention Prof. K. P. Pillai, who was gem of a teacher. He taught me at F. M. College, Balasore during 1967-68. He was transferred from S.K.C.G. College, Parlakhemundi to Ravenshaw College in 1971 and he retired as Professor of English in 1972. He took my Hons. class and taught me Romantic poetry. I use the possessive pronoun 'me' in place of the usual 'us' in such context since I was the lone student in English Hons but it hardly made any difference in his way of teaching. He taught me the way one would teach, full of joy and enthusiasm, a fairly large class with good number of students. He was very punctual and never left class before time. At first, I clearly remember, it was not easy for me to keep pace with his teaching since he

spoke very fast. Words flowed as if they gushed forth from a perennial stream. Once Prof. Trilochan Mishra, the celebrated teacher of English, visited our place and, in course of conversation, commented that there were three teachers in the State who spoke commendable English. And, on being asked to mention them, he said they were Prof. Bidhubhusan Das, Prof. K. P. Pillai and this humble self (referring to himself). All of them were my esteemed and beloved teachers. I cherish their memories. I have heard someone say that students/teachers of English literature are known by their dress and demeanour. If what I've heard is true then Prof. Pillai was every inch a gentleman. He used to dress up in a stylish way. In summer he came to college in a half-sleeve shirt and a trouser. In winter he was a pucca Englishman. He talked less. Students respected him but were afraid of him. He used to go for lunch with his umbrella in hand and came back to office after half an hour. He never left the college before 5 p.m. He was a chronic diabetic but he kept himself fit because of his disciplined habits. I guess so. He became Professor of English in Ravenshaw College. In my P.S.C. interview he was there as subject Expert. Among a variety of questions he asked me the difference between "up on a tree" and "upon a tree".

I never tire of talking about my dear Department and my affectionate teachers. I often search for Room No. 3 and shall be searching as long as I am alive, looking for those golden days that are, alas, lost forever.



My Days at the Department of English, Ravenshaw College

Prof. Guru Charan Behera
M.A.: 1968-70
Teacher: 1981-1990, 1994-2000, 2006-08

As I entered the portals of Ravenshaw College after my admission in 1968 I was awestruck by its magnificent red building and sprawling campus. I could overcome my initial fear and shyness, as a countryside boy would have, when I settled down in New Hostel, which was really new at that time exuding freshness and liveliness and moved around and visited classrooms and library with some other students whom I had befriended in the meantime. My childhood playful naughtiness came up to help me fight shyness and familiarize with the atmosphere of the college.

I still remember mathematics classes of Umakant Mohapatra, chemistry classes of Rama Chandra Acharya and Nrusingha Mishra and physics classes of S. K. Ray I attended. I with my friends often sneaked into the English classes of Pabitra Mohan Nayak to listen to his lucid interpretation, tinged with humour, of essays like those of Stephen Leacock, Robert Lynd, A. G. Gardiner and J. B. Priestley. Lectures by Altaf Hussain, K. S. R. Murthy were craze for us. Then came the intensely fought college union election, in which Amitav Bagchi, a charismatic student leader at that time won as the president of college union, which kept the atmosphere warm and vibrant which we new entrants savored.

Annual sports and annual drama were two significant events in the college. The interclass one-act play competition for four days and the annual drama for two days could be called the theatre festival enlightening as well as enjoyable. They were conducted under the stewardship the then vice-president of the dramatic society, a noted dramatist Pranabandhu Kar. Bijaya Mishra's experimental play *Shavabahakamane* was staged that marked a milestone in the history of Odia theatre. The stage design and the mechanism of light and sound effect made the play a medley of realism, expressionism and symbolism.

The most memorable experience of mine was the centenary celebrations of Ravenshaw College, which was graced by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan as the guest.

When we watched the Frontier Gandhi, a very tall and sturdily built man slightly bent in his long paijama and kurta, his *jhula* (bag) slung across his shoulders striding up to the podium in the sports ground we seemed to be witnessing the history enacted before us. He spoke on the state of Gandhian ideals in Indian subcontinent. Somehow, I could not continue my graduation and post-graduation courses in Ravenshaw College. But its memories persisted.

It was in 1981 I returned to Ravenshaw College as a Lecturer in English and tried to relieve the memories while taking classes in the classrooms where I was once taught. I had served in the college intermittently for about eighteen years from 1981 to 1990, from 1994 to 2001 and from 2006 to 2008. In my first phase Harendra Mohanty joined as Professor and Head. We always looked forward to Prof. Mohanty's witty and critical observations at the departmental seminars. There were two attractive personalities with different shades. Dr. Sadananda Mishra known as a globetrotting scholar would come to the department in his flashy clothes and shoes carrying bags, pens and scents of foreign brand, talking about structuralism and the *Upanishad*. He was both fascinating to watch and listen to. We were amused and amazed by his sartorial extravagance, and his display of books on the latest critical theory. In fact in Odisha he was the tail blazer of Theory Studies that the Indian university campuses were then catching up with. And SadhanParida endearingly called Sadhanda sporting a French cut beard was smart, flamboyant and bohemian and popular among girls. If Sadanand Mishra had an Augustan trait in him, Sadhanda was romantic. Sadhanda published his autobiography in Odia. That seemed ominous, a few years after that he met with his tragic end.

One memorable incident was the visit of the Nobel Prize winner novelist William Golding to the department. We had two Indian English poets Bibhu Padhy and Chinmoy Jena among us as our colleagues. While Bibhu Bhai was quiet and reticent with his eyes often blinking under his glasses, Chinu Bhai had a playful mischievous air about him. Both were loveable.

The most tumultuous event during my first phase was the agitation for the U.G.C. scale of pay jointly organised by the government and non-government college teachers' associations. I participated in all the agitational programmes with enthusiasm. It seemed then the battle was fought at the Ravenshaw College front. During this period, I worked for my Ph.D. research project on the plays of Harold Pinter under the guidance of Dr. Jitendra Narayan Pattanayak. For the purpose almost every summer vacation I had to visit American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad availing several research grants including A.S.R.C. research grants.

One incident I still remember when in 1988 I was transferred to Ravenshaw Morning College, on the day of my last class with +3 1st year Arts students I found the students ready with snacks and flowers to bid me farewell. Likewise on the eve of my retirement at Banaras Hindu University in 2017 M.A. I and M.A. II students on the days of my last classes with them gave me instant farewell singing songs and playing guitar. I cherish the memory of such spontaneous, informal farewells more than prearranged, formal ceremonial farewells.

Returning to the original story, my second phase at Ravenshaw College started from 1994. It was quite eventful. In the beginning I was sent by the college for training in a U.G.C. sponsored course on Communicative English at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (now English and Foreign Languages University). Returning from the training I along with Dr. Bijaya Kumar Bal and Dr. Tarak Parmanik was instrumental in the opening of Communicative English course in the college. It was a new kind of course-learner centered and task based with on- the- job training as an important component. We carried out the course within the limited resources and facilities available. Again, for further training I with Dr. Bal had to go to the Regional Institute of English at Chandigarh. After our return we took steps set up a language laboratory. That came up and course continued for some years but it stopped after our transfer. It was a very useful course, and students were very enthusiastic about this but it stopped because of the lack of long-time strategy on the part of the U.G.C. and the state government and the lack of coordination between the U.G.C. and the state government regarding the implementation of the course.

One significant event during this period was the organization of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of our department in 1998. Dr.Haripriya Singh was the head of the department and Dr. Priyatama Deo was the principal then. Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak was made the general secretary of the jubilee committee and myself the treasurer. I was one the four or five people who worked hard day and night starting from fund collection to the working out of various programmes. It was held for two days 1998 May 12 and 13. Prof. P. S. Sundaram, the former professor of English, Ravenshaw College was the chief guest. On our request Advocate General B. K. Das, paid for to-and-fro air fare for Prof. Sundaram's travel from Chennai with his son, who had to accompany him to assist him in the journey. The inaugural chorus of the Diamond Jubilee was directed and conducted by the legendary singer Aksaya Mohanty. The most significant part of the celebrations was the felicitation ceremony in which former professors of English Sarbeshwar Das, Trilochana Mishra, M. Q. Khan, D. K. Ray, P. K. Mohanty were

felicitated by J.B. Pattanayak, the Chief Minister of Odisha as the chief guest. On the second day, which was the birthday of the Gyanpitha award winner poet Sachi Routray, a symposium on the interaction between modern English poetry and Odia poetry was held in his honour. Ramakant Rath, Dasarathi Das, Saubhagya Kumar Mishra, and Saurindra Barik spoke on the occasion. The programe of the day ended with the staging of David Mamet's play *La Tourista* by the students of the department directed by Dr. Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi. The platinum jubilee events kept me physically, emotionally and intellectually engaged for several days.

During this phase I was called upon to shoulder the responsibility of the additional superintendent and subsequently the superintendent of the New Hostel. I was happy to be involved in the affairs of the hostel of which I was once an inmate. I had to handle it alone because the asst. superintendent ignored the principal's order and did not come to the hostel. That will be another long story. To cut the matter short I would like to state that I had to take certain tough moral stands, one of which was my opposition to the proposal to hold melody program by the outside melody troupe on the hostel Annual Day. I suggested the boarders to present their own performances instead. In previous years we had seen how outsiders thronged the hostel quadrangle, and the crowd of students and non-students, some of whom were drunk and uncontrollable, indulged in vandalism and violence. I was subjected to intense pressurization, gherao but my stubborn stand led to the cancellation of the Annual Day 2001, and the donation of the amount allotted for the purpose to the Gujarat earthquake relief fund.

Immediately after getting relieved from my duty, I along with Jayanta Nanda, the new superintendent had to rush to the S.C.B. Medical College Hospital to see a boarder admitted there. It so happened that we had stay there most of the night, because his condition turned critical and surgery had to be done to save the boy. His father, who reached later in the morning did not seem very happy, and to our surprise he said surgery should have been avoided.

But surprisingly the boarders, who were apparently unhappy with me for my decision to cancel their Annual Day programme, arranged a farewell meeting for me, that too, when this practice had stopped for some years. What moved me most was the farewell given to me by the class IV employees of the hostel, which was the first of its kind. In retrospect I found that the duty performed with sincerity and service rendered with involvement has its own reward. I was of course helped by some boys in making my job smoother. I still remember one boy Bhavani, who was an active and decent boy. I heard later on, the next year unfortunately he got drowned in a stream in a picnic spot.

Again, I returned to Ravenshaw College, this time to Ravenshaw Junior College in 2006. I found out that the college magazine was not coming out for some years. With the active support and guidance of Dr. Malvika Ray, the principal of the college then I edited it and brought it out. In 2007 I joined Ravenshaw University on deputation and after a few months of teaching at the university I went to join Banaras Hindu University as professor of English on 28 January 2008.

Thus ended my tryst with Ravenshaw College.

Though I was a student in the college for a few years I consider my days of teaching in the college as my days of learning, a continuation of my studentship in the institution. During my teaching career I feel I continue to be a student more through my interaction with students that include feedbacks, queries and suggestions, even cat calls and applause. I make them aware of teachers in them and they a student in me. In the process the dichotomy between the teacher and the student gets dissolved. We seem to be engaged in the task of deconstructing and reconstructing each other. There is simultaneous perception of the student in the teacher and the teacher in the student. In fact, life is full of dualities. One has to live with the awareness of these dualities in order to live a whole and steady life.

[Prof. Guru Charan Behera is a renowned academician. He superannuated as the Professor of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He has also published criticisms and short stories in Odia. His criticism in Odia fetched him the Vishuv Milana Puraskar of Odia monthly the *Jhankar*.]

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It was and still is my English Department, Ravenshaw College

Dr. Priyadarshi Dash
B.A.: 1967-69, M.A.: 1969-71

Those were the days… the days of my association with the English department of the famous and great Ravenshaw college (now university) as a student for four years and as a lecturer for seven and half months, the happy memories of which are still fresh in my mind. They are simply unforgettable and I keep on recollecting them every now and then even today. I left the department after doing my post-graduation in 1971, more than five decades ago, but, the light of memories becomes brighter and brighter with each passing day. If anyone asks me about my most enjoyable and memorable moments outside my family, my unhesitating answer will be, "Those were the ones, those have been the ones, those are the ones."

Before I entered the department as its member, I had some idea about it. Though I was a science student for the first two years of my college life, we had English as a compulsory subject. Two senior professors were taking classes for us and the quality of teaching was very good. Study of science subjects in the class rooms and the labs were keeping us extremely busy. Therefore, English was not taken very seriously. At that time my future plans were quite different and I never imagined even in my dreams that I would land up in the English department one day.

Due to some fortuitous circumstances the direction of my career took a sudden and curious turn. I gave up science and joined the humanities for my graduation. After quite some deliberations, my interest in literature dragged me to the English honours course. It was a painful decision in the beginning, because of the well-known fact that getting first division in English was extremely difficult during those days. Unlike History, Political Science, Geography and Economics, first division eluded the English literature students for years together and it was not traditionally an "I.A.S. subject", though some All India and Central services officers had English literature as their post graduation subject. Serious I.A.S. aspirants and university toppers usually gave preference to the 'sure shot' subjects like Political Science, History and Economics. Since I gave up science, doors of Medical and Engineering courses were closed for me. But, jettisoning the idea of a 'first class' college career I listened to the call of my heart which was

craving for study of literature. When I look back, I find that my decision was not impetuous or wrong as the study of English literature kept alive my passion for reading and try my hands for some writing during my working and retirement years. I went where my heart was and I enjoyed my study of English literature fully.

Thus, I entered the hallowed portals of the English department of the Ravenshaw college illuminated by many great and legendary professors and illustrious students who achieved remarkable success in various fields. Many colleges offered honours course in English, but the tag of Ravenshaw enchanted the students and dazzled the outsiders. Great college, great building, great library and exceptionally gifted teachers – this concoction was heady enough to intoxicate us. We were only sixteen in number but the label of "English honours students" gave us an aura and made us feel something special. During those days the students of Physics from science stream and English from Arts had some kind of swagger and self-endowed halo and they developed a "nose-up" style. Heavy and thick books adorned their hands, eyes looked dreamy and the movements had some kind of pensiveness. I do not know whether others looked at or evaluated us in that way but, be it what it may, these special properties were visible and were mostly self-created.

Inside the classrooms was a different story altogether. We were subjected to a lot of verbal "ragging" by the teachers. At every step we were told that studying English literature and sleeping on the bed of roses were not the same thing. We were also cautioned that the percentage of retention of honours in the final examination was generally around a dismal fifty to sixty per cent, hence fates of the remaining forty to fifty per cent were as if "sealed" from the starting point itself! During the lectures also many of us got mouthfuls for our bemused looks as the teachers interpreted them as our inability to understand what they were talking about. Every time the reproaches were followed by their "sincere" advice as "well-wishers" to give up the "audacious" attempts to pursue honours course in English literature.

As the days rolled on, the verbal onslaughts reduced gradually, but did not disappear completely. Half yearly and other periodic examination results were great moments to point out that how prophetic they were in their advice to leave the English honours course, and how unfit some of us were to sit in the classes of this august subject. However, all of us plodded on and none of us gave up the course. Of course, the final results showed this dreadful sixty per cent success, but mercifully our teachers were not there on the spot to taunt us with that "Did we not tell you" kind of remarks.

On the positive side, the teaching standard was of extremely high order and the classes were very interesting. In this context I wish to mention about some of them who were really outstanding. Prof. Trilochan Mishra was a born teacher. He taught *Cymbeline* of Shakespeare and also Rhetorics and Prosodies. His style of teaching was simply inimitable and he knew how to make class captivating. A dry subject like Rhetorics and Prosodies was made memorable by his golden touch. Prof. Sarbeswara Dash taught us O'Neill's play. He too was a great teacher and had an exceptional command over English language. He was a Gandhian in attire and spirit but used to become an Englishman when he opened his mouth – such was his fluency and diction! More about him later. Prof. Pabitra Mohan Nayak had an excellent arsenal of beautiful words, and his capacity to make apposite and alliterative use of them was simply breath-taking. He used to make a quick firing bullets-like display of the words. Coupled with his very attractive style of teaching the most interesting thing was his derisive laughter on getting an incorrect or inappropriate answer to his question and almost all of them met the same fate. Prof. Paresh Raut taught us *King Lear* of Shakespeare. He had a commanding and radiolike voice. His recital of dialogues of Lear were no less royal than any king's. He could keep the class spellbound. Prof. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty's classes were just unforgettable. He taught us *The Eve of St. Agnes* of Keats. The class was scheduled at 4 pm, a very inconvenient time as we would be restless then to leave the college. But his lectures were just like effortless flow of a perennial spring, absolutely magnificent. His classes continued almost invariably past 6 pm without his and our knowledge. In winter days we used to realise that he had overshot his time, when evening engulfed the campus. Prof. Qamruddin Khan was a born actor and he took History of English Literature and also History of Language. His presentations were so dramatic! The style and substance of his lectures kept us virtually enthralled. Prof. Jeetu Patnaik taught us modern poetry and his approach to and understanding of the difficult concepts of modern poetry was excellent. I still remember his lectures on "Journey of the Magi" of T. S. Eliot. I do not think anybody could have made a better presentation. Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra's teaching had that classical touch and there was no second person like him. Extraordinary delivery with unmatched fluency and confidence and over and above his handsome face were a treat to our ears, eyes and mind. By that time he was a renowned modern poet and his poetic sensibilities were very much palpable in his teaching. As it was honours class we did not have the good fortune of hearing many more teachers.

Dr. P. K. Pati was our professor and the Head of the department. He was reputed to be a great teacher, but in the honours class we did not have any taste of that. Though

physically he was short and bony, his eyes were very intimidating from behind a pair of thick glasses. They were like the "Tiger, tiger burning bright". He took weekly one tutorial class for us. He never looked comfortable amongst we 'urchins'. Most of the time he was absent as he went to attend meetings in the university. The days he came, our heartbeat used to go up like that of a 'tachycardia' patient. In his stern voice he only reprimanded us. More about him later when we realised his worth and our fear gave way to worship. The honours classes spanning over two years just flew away. After more than five decades later when I recollect those days I feel as if that period was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

I took admission in the Postgraduate Department of English in 1969. There was another choice before me. The Utkal University started offering P.G. courses in English from that year. But, my attachment to Ravenshaw College was so strong that I could never dream of severing that connection. So, again Ravenshaw for two more years!

After the admission the college reopened in the first week of July, 1969. A students' strike was going on and the those who had assembled outside were trying to force their entry, but were being prevented by the police. There was a lot of noise and slogan-shouting inside and outside the campus was going on. Ironically our first period was Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Prof. Manish Chakraborty was taking the class. Suddenly police opened fire into the campus a hapless student became the victim. After that the students charged outside and clashed with the police. The force counter charged and entered the campus. The students ran away and police mercilessly beat up Dr. D. C. Mishra, the Principal and Prof. Sarbeswar Dash who were there on the spot to pacify the students and did not try to run away. A huge students' agitation followed and the college was closed. It reopened after about two and half months when some settlement was arrived at. Practically our P.G. classes commenced after the second week of September.

The P.G. classes presented a very different picture. In the honours classes we were a compact and "sweet sixteen", but the P.G. group was three and half times larger, a group of "feisty fifty-six". Students from different colleges, diverse backgrounds like urban and rural, and contrasting educational systems like 'rustic' Odia medium schools and 'sophisticated and elite' English medium schools. Initially we, the old Ravenshaw honours students found the atmosphere to be very chaotic. It was like different birds chirping, cooing and cawing at the same time on a huge tree. There was a 'Puri group', an 'urban Cuttack group', a 'rural Cuttack-Puri-Dhenkanal group', a 'Keonjhar group' and so on and so forth.

But, the teacher-student relationship had undergone as if a metamorphosis – the senior teachers who were aggressive suddenly became very friendly, cordial and the younger ones were more older-brotherly. Dr. P. K. Pati was the Professor and the Head of the Department. But he continued to be his ferocious self.

Dr. Pati taught us Milton's *Paradise Lost.* So extraordinary was his teaching method that he could enthral the whole class though his lectures were devoid of humour. But, they had that precision and exactness of mathematics, synthesising quality of chemistry, discipline and orderliness of physics and simultaneously the sonorousness of language of a poet. He never used to look at the students. While teaching he would be putting some crosses and dashes on the blackboard. Each of his class was memorable. We used to wonder why many students were going to Delhi University when so much gold was available in the backyard. Alas! He superannuated just about five months later.

Not only Dr. Pati left, but we had to bear the agony of the loss of some other great teachers like Mr. Trilochan Mishra, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty. Mr. D. K. Ray and Mr. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra who went away on transfer. Their absence created a void which was difficult to fill.

I have already told something about Prof. Sarbeswara Dash. He became the Professor and Head of the Department after the departure of Dr. Pati. He had all the qualities of a great teacher. He had exceptional fluency; his mastery over language was phenomenal and his range was as vast as a solar system. Of course, at times smaller planets were losing their orbits during his lecture. He was a great human being and his heart was full of compassion, kindness and magnanimity, but he was totally uncompromising on matters of principles.

Prof. Harendra Prasad Mohanty took classes on Metaphysical poetry of which he was an expert. His accent was a bit rustic, but his teaching and analytical quality was simply fabulous. I am certain that no student of any other university could have got better lessons on that subject. After departure of Prof. D. K. Ray he took up *The Wasteland* of T. S. Eliot. Such was his competence that he could do full justice to that, though he had never taught modern poetry before.

In this limited space it is not possible to narrate about all our teachers, though each of them had special quality and ability. The story will remain incomplete if I do not say something about some other great teachers. I wish I could write more about them, but for the space constraint. Prof. Biyot Kesh Tripathi was very stylish and gave

his lectures in a slightly low voice, but it was full of substance and he had excellent grasp over the subject. He taught *The White Devil* of Webster. Prof. Paresh Raut took "The Dunciad" of Alexander Pope and his teaching could only be labelled as "superb". Prof. Mahajiteswara Das, who was a great teacher in the true Ravenshaw standard and tradition, taught *In Memoriam* of Tennyson. Prof. N. K. Rath who was a renowned poet himself taught *Hyperion* of Keats; Prof. Satya Shankar Mishra took American Literature. All of them did their job admirably well. Their teaching was very enjoyable and memorable. I had gone to Delhi to secure admission in Delhi University, but the overpowering attraction of Cuttack and Ravenshaw College pulled me back to its fold. I have no regrets as I can emphatically say that I received top class education from my revered professors to whom I was, I am and will always remain grateful.

I am not writing about my classmates and seniors and juniors for which I require many more pages. I reserve those things and more details about my teachers and the English department for a memoir which I am writing now.

I remember my last day in the department and the college with a very melancholic feeling. The moment the last period was over I left, because my heart was already flooded with tears. I could not continue to remain there with that grief-laden heart, not even a moment more. As I was cycling back I gave a wistful look at Room number 3, the then home of the sixth year English classes. My classmates were chatting and bidding farewell to one another and perhaps wishing luck for the Master's examination. That was the end of my days in the English department and end of my student days too.

After appearing for the Civils examination I returned again to Ravenshaw College, this time as an ad hoc lecturer in November, 1972. The stay was very brief as (un)fortunately I was selected for the I.A.S.. My stint as a lecturer was extremely happy and unforgettable, but I am not going to lengthen this piece by elaborating on that. My four years as a student of the English department will remain etched in my memory till I depart from this world. Really, those were the days..........

[Dr. Priyadarshi Dash, a former member of the Indian Administrative Service, has served in various high-profile capacities. He has recently translated the Sonnets of Shakespeare from English to Odia.]



On the Road to Fulfilment

Dr. Bhagaban Jayasingh
M.A.: 1969-71
Teacher: 1981-89

My association with Ravenshaw College and P.G. Department of English was twofold: first when I was an English Honours student of this historic institution from 1969 to 71; and then as a Faculty of English from 1981 to 1989. During my graduation period the Department offered me a platform to explore the uncharted territory of my creative potential. It was here I began to be published in journals and periodicals of repute both in Odia and English and achieved *some* renown as a poet. I fondly remember my Professor Sarbeswar Das who taught us modern poetry and modern criticism; and it was during the course of his lectures he introduced us to the world of Euro-American poetry and criticism. I took immense interest in his lectures particularly when he spoke glowingly of the poets like Baudelaire, Pound, Eliot and others whose worldwide influence on the contemporary young poets was the talking point in the intellectual circles in India and abroad.

It was here I heard a lot about the poets, who later became my hot favourites: from Paul Valery, Charles Baudelaire of France to Quasimodo, Ungaretti of Italy, German poet Rainer Maria Rilke and George Seferis of Greece to Pablo Neruda of Chile, and Lorca of Spain. It is true that I did not get an opportunity to read them all, and even though I read some of them I was too young to grasp their poetry then. I remember how in later years Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs Du Mal* and Rilke's *Duino Elegies* cast a magic spell on my mind for years and years together.

I joined Ravenshaw College in 1981 on transfer from Government College, Bhawanipatna, which has now turned into a full-fledged university. I grabbed every opportunity to meet eminent professors who came to address the seminar, a congregation of Honours and postgraduate students of English. For the first time I came across such eminent scholars like Prof. Bidhu Bhuan Das, former Director of Public Instruction, Prof. Prafulla C. Kar of Baroda University and Prof. Prafulla Kumar Pati, who had then retired as Vice Chancellor of Sambalpur University. Among other professors who visited the Department, mention must be made of Professor Thomas J. King Jr., a noted

Shakespearean scholar who was one of the earliest scholars to use "word processing and sequence analysis" in the study of Shakespearean texts. As far as I remember Prof King delivered a lecture on Shakespearean tragedy with special emphasis on *King Lear*.

On one occasion Madison Morrison, a Professor from some American university, paid a visit to the Department. In the afternoon he delivered a talk on the state of contemporary American culture and literature. On the following day I attended a poetry reading session in some hotel in Cuttack where Prof Morrison had read some of his self-composed poems to a select audience of about 25 - 30 poets and poetry lovers. In the evening, Prof. M. Q. Khan, Head of the Department, invited him to a grand and lavish dinner party at his government quarters on the campus. Prof. Khan came to my Jobra home to invite me personally. Dr. Bibhu Padhi, a well-known Indian poet in English was among a few other invitees who attended the party.

The candle-light dinner menu was really delectable with a variety of food, specially cooked by Professor Khan's wife with a lot of love and interest. The dining table was arranged with exquisite care and with platters heaped with delicately spiced foods: an array of chicken dopiaza, *pohala* (a small river fish) fries, shrimps and a curry of Chilika fresh mud-crabs with a garnish of rose petals. The food, as a matter of fact, made me drool. Prof. Khan was aware of the way the British and American people eat their food, and therefore, he had arranged the cutlery needed for the purpose. When we picked up a knife and fork to eat, Prof. Morrison began eating with his hand, saying, "But I've become an Indian." Our embarrassment was complete when we looked at each other for expressing our feelings.

On another occasion William Golding, a British novelist, playwright, and poet who stormed the literary world with his debut novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954) came to the Department, accompanied by the British High Commissioner to India (Sorry, I have forgotten his name) to deliver a lecture. The Department had made elaborate arrangements to extend a rousing welcome to the famous writer. Prior to his visit, police had also made a number of visits to the meeting place to ensure his safety and security. It was perhaps the first ever visit of a Nobel Laureate (he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983) to the Department since its inception in 1922. Golding did not speak much, but read out some passages from his books *Lord of the Flies* and *Rites of Passage*.

Prof. Khan was a wonderful organiser who never missed an opportunity to hold a seminar in the Department. On a couple of occasions, he held state level conferences of English teachers. It was 1988, when the Department decided to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of T. S. Eliot, the American-born British poet and critic who reflected the mood of his time and had given the twentieth century many of its literary treasures. The euphoria for Eliot had not died down yet, and some of his words or catch-phrases were still quoted by the college and university teachers and students of the time like "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons," "not with a bang but a whimper," "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" "Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?" etc.

Many Eliot scholars and professors were invited to this two-day-long seminar, including one young and beautiful lady assistant professor from Jammu Kashmir University. I was asked by Prof. Khan to bring out another volume of "Phoenix" (Department's creative journal) and a Souvenir which had to be released during the seminar. It was a tough task to accomplish. Of course, the Department had already brought out three or four issues of "Phoenix" which I edited myself; but getting both of them printed in about two weeks was not easy. Moreover, the printing technology was not as advanced as it is today. Prof. Khan promised all help, and so did my senior colleagues Yeats scholar Dinesh Patnaik, playwright Ramesh Panigrahi and poet Bibhu Padhi who were the other members of the editorial board. Both the journals were released at the valedictory ceremony.

Basically, as a teacher of English who loved to teach poetry for more than thirty years and a creative writer for many more years than that, I took up teaching as the passion of a creative writer. While teaching from Milton to Baudelaire, Dickinson to Eliot, Spender and Larkin, and even the Indian poets like Nissim Ezekiel and Jayanta Mahapatra, I had tried to share my understanding from a creative writer's perspective. I used to tell my students that if these writers had attracted such world attention it was because of their vision, transcendence, understanding of human mind, and nature, handling the complexity and dimension of human experience in their own, unique individual ways.

I recollect how I was assigned *Relationship,* a long poem by Jayanta Mahapatra who had received the first ever Sahitya Akademi award for an Indian book in English in 1982. This award-winning book was prescribed in the post graduate syllabus as part

of the 'special paper' on Indian Literature in English, earlier called Indo-Anglian or Indo-English literature. Fugue-like in structure, the book was an extremely difficult text, and the high degree of complexity in the use of theme and imagery stood in the way of appreciating the text in the proper way. One day in my interaction with Jayanta Sir, who was often invited to the Department to read his poetry, or share his experience, I asked him about the book he simply smiled and said, "You are a poet yourself, you know things better." I kept quiet.

It has been a long time since I left my dear Ravenshaw College, my dearest Department of English. Sometimes I fish out the recollections of my days at this historic institution and feel terribly disturbed when I feel I cannot be a part of it except in imagination. O my English Department! I shall remain ever grateful to you for all that you did for me, transforming a fuzzy caterpillar to a butterfly. Never mind, I do not claim to be a butterfly myself, but I have got its wings to flit around the garden in search of fulfilment in life.

[Dr. Bhagaban Jayasingh is a reputed academician. He is an established poet, creative writer and critic of both Odia and English Literature. Dr. Jaysingh has been conferred the Odisha Sahitya Academy Award and Bishuba Jhankar Award for poetry.]



The Frenetic Life: My Ravenshaw Days

Mr. Chinmoy Jena
B.A.: 1968-70, M.A.: 1970-72
Teacher: 1974-81, 1985-92, 2000-09

Ravenshaw was no enigma for me when I joined the College as a student in 1967. We used to play matches at the Ravenshaw ground since 1964 while the Inter-District trials were held, though the premises of the college were out of bounds for me.

My father was a student in the 1920's and since the 1950's six of my brothers and a sister were students there and I was the last in the line. In my first year I became known thanks to helping the College win the Inter-College cricket championships. The consequences were rather sweet and sour with teachers and students complimenting me and the lady class-mates of my elder brother treating me to good food by making me sit between them. It was ragging of the most subtle kind.

Life became easy in the classroom as many of my teachers were classmates or friends of my brothers. In 1968, when I joined as a student of English Honours, there was a distinct problem. The English Department was just a room, 20'x20' in the Arts block and had only a big cupboard and nothing more. The Staff Common Room was just above the Psychology Department and teachers of most departments reposed together.

Our Honours classes were held in the P.H.R. (Physics Honours Room) and then we had to run Arts Block to rooms 21 or 23 for History and Political Science classes. Alternative English classes were held in one of the rooms in the cluster of rooms above the college office - 11, 12, 13 or 14.

Some of the classes were held in Room No. 36 (near West hostel) too. It was a life of running from block to block and I guess that kept us fit but the ladies had a tough time. The Commerce Block was yet to come up. In 1969 our Political Science classes were held in the ground floor of the block and another location was added to multiply our trouble.

Now on to Post Graduate days. Our Post Graduate first year classes were held in Room No. 33, right above Room No. 3 and we were perpetually disturbed by movement of teachers and students.

It was the route to most of the class rooms and also the teachers to either going to or coming from the Staff Common Room. The very next year we were spared of the ordeal of leading the 'nomadic' life.

We had the proud privilege of being the first batch to occupy Room 29 in the Commerce Block and the second floor became our Department. Life indeed was going to be easier with no running around the campus.

We passed out in 1972 but the love affair was far from over. Much has been written about our teachers by our alumni, spread over more than fifty years and I should not risk repetition.

On the other hand, I would not be doing justice to those men who shaped my thought process and gave me a reason to be a teacher. In September 1975 I contacted Malaria just two months before my O.P.S.C. interview.

After five days of absence, with leave of course, one evening Prof. Sarbeswar Dash appeared at our house, came in, felt my forehead and told my mother, "He is not going to college for fifteen days. I will speak to the Principal and make sure that his classes are engaged."

Those were the days of terror, the terror of emergency was hovering above us all yet here was my Professor willing to take a massive risk. I went to the college after fifteen days and found all my classes engaged by various teachers. Those were the times and such were the teachers.

Once during our cricket nets in September, 1970, it started raining so most of us decided to play football in our whites to maintain our fitness. Those were passing clouds and as one cluster passed the next would appear and we played for about 45 minute and were drenched to our bones.

When we were returning and near the Principal's office someone called out my name. It was Prof. Soubhagya Misra at the entrance of the office. I went meekly to him and he called me in. There he told Maheswar Nayak, the stenographer to the Principal, "Give me a pen and a sheet of paper."

He handed it over to me with the command, "Write pronunciation." I was so nervous and scared at his tone, I wrote "Pronunciation."

"This is what happens when you play football in cricket dress," he said.

Then he asked Maheswar to give me a towel with which I would dry myself. I came out of the office feeling like a wet and humiliated cat only to find none of my

friends around as though the night had swallowed them. No cricketer wants to spell tricky words it seemed.

Then in October 1969, I broke my finger during a match and had to go around with my left arm in a sling but could write with my right. The second day in the college Sujeet Mohanty and I were on our way to the Staff Common Room to meet the Head of the Department and other teachers requesting them for time till I recovered. The teachers were quick to allow me rest, "fifteen days and not a day more." The Head said "and get ready to play soon," he added.

His words were prophetic. In December 1969 I was included in the Ranji Trophy squad for the first time.

Finally, Prof. Biyot Kesh Tripathy (popularly known as BKT) who was also in charge of the cricket team. In 1969 our college team lost to a lowly college in the Inter-College cricket tournament. The champions were knocked out in the first round!

Shocked by the result, the players decided to skip classes for a week and avoid the taunts and snide remarks from the fellow Ravenshawvians. I had done well and I went after two days and as I was going through the portico, I came face to face with Biyot Sir, the last man on earth I wanted to meet.

BKT: So you have the cheek to attend classes?

I: Yes Sir

BKT: You haven't hanged yourself?

I: No Sir. I fought till the end to remain not out but did not get any support.

BKT: Okay. If you lose like this again hang yourself first and then meet me.

I: Yes, Sir.

Straight out of a play by Beckett, a theatre he had mastered.

The last days of my life as a student were fulfilling as I captained the college cricket team for two years and won the trophy each time. We won the Inter-University cricket Championship for the first time ever in 1972 and three of us received the coveted Ravenshaw Blue. Sujeet Mohanty, Pranab Das and I were the recipients, joining Madan Mohanty (1964) and Ashok Jena (1967) making it five from our department. No other department can boast of five winners of the Ravenshaw Blue. In addition to cricket, I was the captain of the Table Tennis teams in 1969-70 and 1970-71.

Just a little more than two years later I joined the Department as a teacher (transferred from B.J.B. College) and it was almost like returning to my cradle only as a bigger baby.

Sharing the same Staff Common Room with most of my teachers was reassuring as well as filled me with a sense of awe. In a way it made me feel comfortable in the presence of my teachers who would guide me here as well.

On the day of joining Prof. Sarbeswar Dash asked me to engage a P.G. class just to get a feel of teaching in a senior class. It was a P.G. Final year class and I made my entry happily and then looked up and froze.

There was my friend's younger brother who had acted as the Boy as well as Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, Dipak Misra, Jitamitra Mohanty and worse still my mixed doubles partner in Table Tennis sitting in the class. I just spoke a few words on Forster and came back before the class was over.

We made a pact that they would make themselves scarce for two months till I felt comfortable teaching them. Life was easy with twenty-seven teachers in the department and classes were so few.

My spell as a teacher between 1974 and 1981 was the most pleasant phase as a teacher. I felt very comfortable teaching them as most of them were so receptive even to Beckett. Many of them went on to become top administrators, academicians. writers, artists and actors. I simply waltzed through those seven years.

Of all the batches of students I have taught, the students of 1976 stand out. They might not have set the Mahanadi on fire through their academic activities then but they turned out to be extremely successful teachers of literature. Some of them distinguished themselves by their erudition and won several prestigious fellowships. I too had the pleasure of having some of them as my colleagues later.

They were extremely enthusiastic where the affairs of the Department were concerned and each function they conducted were full of camaraderie. Many of them continue to be very good young friends of mine and I will always remember them collectively as the finest and friendliest batch I ever taught.

My second spell in Ravenshaw from 1985 to 1992 was rather tame in comparison. There were plenty of activities with dignitaries and scholars frequenting the department. The number of teachers had come down slightly but not by much and the pressure was not very acute.

Classes were regular but extra-curricular activities far outweighed the curricular ones. I spent much more time in the college gymnasium than in the Staff Common Room.

It was in 1983 that I was appointed a scorer by the A.I.R. I watched and acted as scorer in Test Matches, One Day Internationals and national domestic matches numbering almost one hundred.

I will never forget scoring for the C.B.U. (Caribbean Broadcasting Union). I had the privilege of sharing the commentary booth with Tony Cozier, Michael Holding, Reds Perreira, Charlie Davis and Harsha Bhogle as the guest commentator. I was promoted to the Indian panel of scorers in 1994. That was extremely gratifying and that too being elevated to the All-India panel was also a first for Ravenshaw.

I left Ravenshaw in 1992 and returned for my final stint in 2000. This phase was most gruelling yet satisfying. The number of teachers had dwindled by almost half and the number of classes had gone up.

Most of my colleagues were familiar with me and the Principal was a good friend since the B.J.B. days. The students, though not as flamboyantly brilliant as the 1970's were quietly efficient and life in the classrooms were pleasant.

It was after 1976 that I came across another outstanding batch in 2003. The students were academically strong and kept the teachers on their toes with their pointed and penetrating questions. Most of the teachers loved teaching them and each class, properly engaged, was extremely rewarding. Almost a third of the students passed with first class marks.

Their achievement was not confined to academic excellence alone but their sense of belonging. In 2003 we were short on funds and our Head of the Department Shri S. K. Joshi suggested that we forego the Annual Day celebrations. When asked the students overwhelmingly voiced their opinion in favour of having them.

Almost fifteen girls set out to purchase material needed for the function. The decorators and florists were done away with and the students undertook the task of doing it all themselves. We got Prof. Sarbeswar Dash as the Chief Speaker and Jayanta Mahapatra as the Chief Guest and held the function. We were able to salvage some self-respect, at least for the time being. It is a batch very few teachers have forgotten.

The period between 2004 and 2009 were extremely enervating with teachers leaving one after the other. The students still were eager for classes and it would have been criminal to neglect them.

In 2009, my final year in Ravenshaw, the number of teachers had come down to five. In the meantime I had been elected as the Vice President of Odisha Cricket Association, a first for the Department.

The very next year I was chosen as Chairman, Ranji Trophy Selection Committee, a first in the history of Ravenshaw. I was also the Vice president of the Ravenshaw College/University Athletic Club. Day by day my responsibilities were multiplying and time was so unsparing in its march.

During this phase my most worthwhile achievement was procuring enough funds to renovate the ground. We got more than a crore of rupees thanks to a largesse from OCA, and relaid the entire ground. The planning and the execution was done by OCA and we were spared the trouble of dealing with the accounts.

During one summer the ground was dug up, replaced with soil from Mahanadi and before the monsoon arrived, Bermuda grass seeds were sown. The matting wicket was done away with and replaced with four turf strips and a pavilion came up. The ground gained recognition all over the country when the Deodhar Trophy was held and more than twenty Indian players and the Zimbabwe national team took part.

There were Virat Kohli, Ravi Ashwin, Ajinkya Rahane, CheteswarPujara, Bhubaneswar Kumar and Ravindra Jadeja and a host of other Internationals playing for various zones. It was like a dream coming true for us.

It was my farewell gift to Ravenshaw and I can boast of getting rid of 140 years of embarrassment for our Alma Mater when players from other teams refused to play on our ground, calling it a 'sand pit.'

To re-lay an entire ground of thirteen acres was a very tall order but we had done it. When we hosted the Vijay Hazare Trophy (a 50-over tournament played between state teams) Sourav Ganguly had retired from Test match cricket but continued to play for Bengal.

While he was fielding on the boundary line we asked him how he felt about our ground, he, in his candid manner said that we may not have the infrastructure available at Barabati Stadium but our pitch was better and our outfield too was as smooth as the more illustrious ground.

That was some compliment coming from the former Indian Captain, who had played his cricket widely and knew a thing or two about pitches and outfields, was truly uplifting. We had succeeded in impressing Sourav and that was some achievement.

I still continue to be associated with cricket and the Odisha Cricket Association has made me a Member of the first ever Cricket Advisory Committee, the apex committee of the Association to select coaches and selectors for various men and women's teams. The affair with cricket continues.

My last favourite batch is that of 2009. They were the most deprived lot as one after the other, teachers left the Department. With the promotions of Prof. Amulya Kishore Purohit and Dr. Kamala Prasad Mohapatra, we were reduced to just five. Many of their Special Paper classes had to be dropped as they clashed with the pass subjects which at times had almost 200 students on the rolls.

If one of their classes was dropped, there would be chaos in the entire block. We had to neglect the P.G. students and they understood our plight. All along we struggled, fatigued and famished but they endured the neglect we, or time, inflicted on them.

We remained happy all through trying to keep up a brave front but it hurt me then and it still hurts me and they shall always remind me of our struggles together.

Now, when I, at times, try to contemplate my days in Ravenshaw, spanning more than half a century, I begin to miss many things.

When I enter the portals of Ravenshaw today I always expect to see the Tennis and Basketball courts on the left.

As I turn towards the Commerce Block I half expect to see the Ravenshaw Canteen managed by various people. As I move forward, I expect to see the Open Air Theatre (now the Amphitheatre) where so many memorable plays were staged. A theatre where Sartre, Camus, Arthur Miller and Odia playwrights like Manoranjan Das and Bijoy Mishra too had come alive.

This is the Open-Air Theatre where we had staged *Waiting for Godot*, and Pinter's The Birthday Party during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Department in 1974.

We had staged The Marriage Proposal in the present Open-Air Theatre during the Commemoration Day of Ravenshaw College. *Waiting for Godot* was directed by Prof. Biyot Kesh Tripathy while the rest were directed by Gopa Das (Gopa Di to us). In all the plays barring Godot Freddie Wright and I acted and Gopa Di acted both in Chekov and Pinter's plays.

This is the Open Air Theatre where in 1977 the Drama Society had staged Jean Paul-Sartre's play Men Without Shadows translated by me. The Drama Society was entirely a show of the Department of English with Sushama Tej (Baby Nani) as Vice

President, Jitendra Narayan Patnaik (Jitu Sir) and I as Associate Vice Presidents. Jitu Sir had asked me to translate the play and I had done it.

I remember how I spent more than 50 days in the company of Hemanta Das, Director and Akshaya Mohanty, who composed the background music. During the staging of the play I came to work with Nikhil Baran Sengupta, the Art Director, Hara Patnaik and Shrikanta Chowdhury who looked after the lights. This is the first glimpse I had of Mihir Das as actor and Bikram Dash too. It was an enriching experience.

It is the place where Biju Babu had delivered his first address to Ravenshawvians following his release after emergency in 1977.

When I enter our Department, I no longer experience the ecstasy of gazing at the college field through the windows because another magnificent edifice has come up and blocked my favourite sight forever.

I prefer to head straight for the field on which we played with so much passion. We lay on the sparse grass and exchanged notes on cricket and we returned home only when "the moon rose above the Ladies Hostel "(there was only one then) as it was when that the road became less crowded. We returned home feeling the slightly chilly autumn breeze caressing our tired bodies.

Fifty-seven years later, to confess, the Ravenshaw ground attracts me the most. It was my dream to have a decent field and we managed to build one. The Department has changed and the old familiar settings are no more there. I fail to connect or cope with it as the simple ways we were used to all those years have yielded place to new and more complex ways.

If Ravenshaw was a habit for me since the 1960's the Department of English was a way of life for forty-one years. I have preserved some certificates fondly and they remind me of the time I was there. And there are memories, hundreds and thousands of them lodged in almost every nook of this endearing floor that is the Department of English.

[Mr. Chinmoy Jena is a State Cricketer, Selector, Administrator - 1969 to 2012. He is also a widely published poet. He has also received the Ravenshaw Gaurav Award (Contribution to Sports in Ravenshaw)]

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Happy Days

Prof. Sarat Chandra Satapathy
B.A.:1968-70, MA: 1970-72

"But for him all my thoughts, all my feelings, would have been of common things." (Pause. With extraordinary vehemence.) "Professional worries!" (Calmer.) "Beauty, grace, truth of the first water, I knew they were all beyond me." (Pozzo in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot)

Beckett succinctly sums up my life-experience of six normative years in Ravenshaw College out of which I lived four invaluable years (1968 – 72) pursuing a career through English Studies in the Department of English. Those were the formative years of my education and also my rewarding years.

The two years at the intermediate level had wiped off some of my initial reticent attitude, natural to a country lad coming from a mofussil school where the medium of instruction was Odia. English was taught as an ancillary subject. Receiving instructions in the class room in an alien tongue and in unfamiliar surroundings, I must say, was very unnerving at the beginning. This was probably the case with novices like me. But in the Honours classes there was integration with the new world and we enjoyed a degree of emotional comfort; one can say this in hind sight.

We were sixteen in number at the Honours level. The syllabus looked unfamiliar and frightening. The popular college lore, 'the amount of hard work that might assure one of being placed in the much coveted First-Class list in other subjects, would often guarantee altogether losing out one's place in the Honours list in English' did not generate much hope for success in most of us. But once we had jumped into the river and got ourselves into the swirling current, we had to swim on. As they say, the die was cast and our destiny was made, we were to study English Literature. There was possibly no going back.

Reading and writing the foreign tongue posed reasonable and welcome challenges to me though speaking English with confidence and ease was often an intimidating exercise. This was the case with most of the students sharing my background. The fortunate few coming from English medium city schools were mostly speaking

something unintelligible for us. It sounded a bit like English though we could not make any sense out of the sound of their spoken words. But soon we were all friends.

The teachers appeared enormous in their pronouncements. Shakespeare shook us up, Wordsworth gave us no romantic goose-bump and his daffodils wafted no sweet smell anywhere, Keats could not make us feel if there was any conspiring Autumn in this part of the world, O'Neill demanded a thorough search for discovery of naturalism and we did not feel very natural flipping the pages and looking for it strenuously there. Yeats and Eliot together made a mess of our conservative beliefs and nearly unsettled our serene idea of literature with their strange treatise on modernism. Modern poetry started looking less poetic by the day. Charles Morgan's ideas about creative imagination did not fill us with any creative energy and we felt our imagination as a vital faculty going numb. But they were our apprentice years and we were being burnt in the crucible of knowledge and hammered on the anvil of regeneration. The proverbial Phoenix of the old dispensation was being burnt and getting rejuvenated to rise again from the ashes. Looking back, we realize that we were subject to the pangs of rebirth of a different order. We were first being battered down and getting rebuilt. That has always been the basic purpose of true education; shaping out the contours, smoothening the rough edges, filtering out the impurities to leave behind a crystalline personality. Ravenshaw's English Department was surely the laboratory dedicated to designing and producing impeccable personalities for the future, in those days. Our teachers were the makers of our destiny.

I gratefully remember my great and good teachers like Professor Prafulla Kumar Pati, Professor TrilochanMisra, Professor Debendra Kumar Ray, Professor Paresh Chandra Rout, Professor Pabitra Mohan Nayak, and Professor Soubhagya Kumar Mishra. They taught us during the undergraduate years but had gone out of the College when we entered the Post Graduate classes. Professor Sarbeswar Das and Professor Harendra Prasad Mohanty taught us for four years. I make a special mention of the two illustrious senior academics because I had the rare good fortune of interacting with them as a student, sharing long hours of rewarding discussions. I walked the Ravenshaw roads by their side on many days talking of literature and life. In those sessions of my interaction they have taught me everything from Shakespeare to Fakir Mohan, Socrates to Gandhi and Gopabandhu, and from Krishna to Christ. But most importantly they helped me to fashion my attitude to the world we are born to live in. They taught me to accept life as it came from our Providence without any complaint. One must discard any ill thoughts of running away from it. For me they were the Wise Men. Like the Gurus of the ancient Gurukul tradition, they were there in a different garb but were cast in the same mould,

happy to give you all, if only you asked for it. The rule was simple, 'Ask! Thou shall be given.' My glorious relationship lasted the whole life time. My Post-Graduate years were my life-giving years. I was fortunate to be there, in the great Ravenshaw College and in the company of great Masters.

I happily remember my other teachers like Professor K. P. A. Pillai, Professor Nrusingha Kumar Rath, Professor Biyot Kesh Tripathy, Professor SushamaTej, and Professor Rama Chandra Tripathy, Professor Deba Pattnaik and Professor Durgesh Nandini Das, to mention a few. They were very popular with the students for their qualities of head and heart. My apologies that I cannot remember all the names of my teachers of the period because the passing years have somewhat fogged my memory.

I remember my classmates; some of them have left us untimely for their heavenly abode. May their souls rest in peace. Some have migrated into strange lands and settled down in distant shores. Good wishes for them and their families. Those who are around do not find it often convenient to connect with one another even though their hearts longed for it. Such is the character of our times. The Department has sent hundreds of capable men and women to different professions and they have succeeded in their respective spheres of activity in the country and abroad earning name and fame for us. But I wish to make a special mention of a very special personality who was our Association Secretary. He was our very own Rebatikanta Mohanty, a wonder boy who always wore a Cherub's smile and never spoke a harsh word about anyone. He definitely received his very own divine calling, felt a thrilling sensation; there was a beckoning, an awakening. He instantly discontinued his studies on the eve of the examinations and renounced the world. Yes, he renounced the world. After his education in comprehensive Vedic studies and following the hoary Indian tradition, he has been christened as Swamy SuddhanandaSaraswati after entering the sacred order of monks. He has dedicated himself to teaching the secrets of Self Knowledge imparting spiritual education to the world that is gradually getting lost in the eddies of temporality. He still wears his trademark smile with childlike simplicity and communicates with the high and mighty, the downtrodden and the underprivileged, the local population and the curious high value congregations in reputed Universities spread over different continents with élan. A true teacher of spirituality he has turned out to be a unique product, probably the only one till date, from the English Department of our Ravenshaw.

I think it necessary to recount a personal experience to make my point about our Institution and the importance of the English Department. I had entertained a fond

hope all the time that someday I would return to my dear Institution to my old class room as a teacher. But I couldn't. Only the 'fortunate' lot could make it to its portal. There was a brief moment of regret, I must admit. But it came in a flash, the famous lines from Shakespeare:

"... if it be not to come it will be now; if it be not now; it will come: the readiness is all: ... (*Hamlet* V. ii.) They had taught me to take life with equanimity and grace. Why grieve for nothing! I felt restored.

At difficult moments of life in later years I have drawn immense strength remembering my Shakespreare:

"Men must endure

Their going hence, even as their coming hither.

Ripeness is all." (*King Lear* V. ii.)

I owe it all to my mentors in the great Institution. It all happened a long time ago. As they say much water has flowed down the Mahanadi. Ravenshaw has become a University. But I hope the proud feeling of being a Ravenshawvian has not suffered a jolt or the joy of being a part of the Department of English hasn't waned in the students. Ravenshaw, if you have been in it even for a brief period, lives in you for the rest of your life and keeps educating you (if you want to be!) all through your life.

I am sure the generations entering its portal must remember that they are at the end of their happy days. The world they are preparing to enter does not forgive any one for anything; it demands and invariably extracts a heavy price from you always. Hence gather your tools of survival now. You must succeed in life and discover for yourself, Shakespeare again:

"How beauteous mankind is!" *(The Tempest* V. i.)

That would be your tribute to our *alma mater*.

God bless you.

[Dr. Satapathy is a creative writer and a translator. He also writes for two Odia dailies *The Samaja* and *The Prameya*. He has also translated Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* into Odia with a long critical introduction. Accepted for publication by Central Sahitya Akademi.]

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Down Memory Lane – Rather Transcendental Path

Dr. Papiya Ray
B.A.: 1968 -70, M.A.: 1970-72
Teacher : 1986-95

From the cloistered, cocooned, sheltered and regimented life in the Convent to the liberal, expansive and imposing Ravenshaw College - the centre of excellence, the temple of learning throbbing with life and energy, vibrating with activities in the field of academics, sports, culture, Drama and debate - my childhood friend, Minati Mohanty and I walked together, navigating through the seemingly never-ending corridors, verandas and pathways, thrilled by the towering trees, the greenery and the beautiful flowers and birds in the Botanical Garden. Overawed by the sprawling vast fields and lawns, and awestruck by the sheer beauty, magnificence, splendour and grandeur of the architectural wonder, the college seemed like the absorbing, all-embracing mother, the microcosm of the outer world but we were made to feel at home and comfortable by our scholarly and dedicated teachers who were kind, compassionate and understanding.

I did English Honours (1968-70) and P.G. English (1970-1972). I take this opportunity to pay my tribute to my teachers who were thorough and made us thorough and instilled into us not only proper values but also love for English literature and English language like during the freedom movement, Mahatma Gandhi taught the Indians to fight against British domination but not to hate the English people or the English language.

The teachers in the English Department were a treasure trove of knowledge and wisdom, progressive and up-to-date yet maintained traditions and old-world values, for our teachers, teaching was not just a profession but a mission; they taught us with a missionary zeal. They not only taught, guided and groomed us but also shaped and moulded the persona which we carry today. Their lectures were lucid and succinct with range and depth. In the first few classes, they taught us to first appreciate and then be critical of poetry, prose or any form of literature as literature is the reflection of life, we do the same thing in our day-to-day lives - to first see the good in people, situations and circumstances and then be critical and judgemental; to see the spark of light in the

darkness. To quote Shakespeare, "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, Would men observingly distill it out".

Prof. Prafulla Pati, who taught us poetry, had the unique ability to explain deep and profound ideas in simple language which we could easily understand. I distinctly remember he wrote down the poem, "The Telephone" by Robert Frost on the blackboard and explained it in such a lucid manner using such simple language that we could easily understand and remember. He also dinned into our young minds the communion between man and the Supreme Power.

Prof. Sarbeswar Das taught us American Literature, Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* and *The Hairy Ape*. His attire, diet and principles were Gandhian but he spoke with a slight American accent. Incidentally, he was one of the founders of the American Studies Research Centre where I did my research later. He introduced us to all the techniques and isms like Naturalism, Realism, Romanticism and Expressionism. In one of his classes, I remember he asked us to expand the idea "Sweet are the uses of adversity". After reading all the answers, he said my answer was the best. My classmates, Sura Rath, Sujit Mohanty and Devanand Mishra read my answer and they too agreed. There was no jealousy and no rivalry, we were proud of each other and that is how our writing skills were honed.

Prof. Sarbaswar Das, Prof. Trilochan Mishra and Prof. Mahajiteshwar Das taught us Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies with such authority and passion that we fell in love with Shakespeare and his plays, and found them so relevant, universal and timeless. Prof. Sarbaswar Das taught us Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* so beautifully that I still remember some dialogues.

Prof. Harendra Mohanty taught us Metaphysical Poetry with such intensity that we were transported to a metaphysical world. I still remember Donne's "Death, be not proud" which I often quote.

Prof. Soubhagya Mishra taught us Modern Poetry, especially T. S. Eliot's *The Four Quartets* so well and with such scholarship that we looked forward to attending his classes.

I would like to mention Celia Roberts, Visiting Professor who tutored me and Minati Mohanty to get by heart Shakespeare's soliloquies and present them in the hall full of eminent scholars, our teachers and other students, which was applauded by all. After that, we grew in confidence and "walked in beauty".

I would like to mention some emotional moments - after I finished writing my last paper for B.A. English Honours, I broke down and started crying and said that I have not done well maybe because I was exhausted after studying the whole night but I was reassured by the kind words of Prof. Soubhagya Mishra who told me, "your result will be the best". That is how our teachers encouraged us and boosted our morale.

Our teachers were role models for us who inspired me to choose this noble profession. We were so fortunate to have such wonderful and dedicated teachers that attending one class, listening attentively to a lecture and taking down notes was equivalent to reading ten books. Whatever they taught us has remained imprinted in the inner layer of the mind like sparkling diamonds studded on a golden necklace.

My pranam to all the teachers...

From 1986-1995, I taught English Literature and American Literature at Ravenshaw College. It was a pleasure teaching, guiding and grooming not only the fledgling, starry-eyed, and enthusiastic +2 students but also the bright Honours, P.G. and MPhil students of the English Department. We also got the opportunity to meet and interact with reputed and eminent teachers, scholars, writers and academicians from India and overseas. We organised and participated in seminars and conferences where we had world-class academicians and writers as guest speakers.

Remembering my days at the college as a teacher, there are some incidents that I would like to briefly mention:-

Nobel Laureate William Golding once visited our department as a Guest Speaker with his wife. I sang a Vedic hymn which they appreciated; Mrs Golding, very graciously, told me, "Thank you for your beautiful song, you look beautiful in this beautiful saree". I wore a handloom Odisha saree for the occasion.

Once during Cuttack Bandh, I walked from Chowdhury Bazar to Ravenshaw College and cooked lunch for the entire staff of the English Department. Our colleague, Hadibandhu Satpathy, said, "Madam, you should be given a gold medal".

During the Teachers' strike for the U.G.C. scale, some of us in the English Department took leading roles but followed Gandhian principles of peaceful resistance and dialogue.

We also staged Arthur Miller's outstanding play, *All My Sons* which was highly acclaimed. Since I did my research on Miller's tragedies, I directed the play. That is how the acting skills and potential of students were harnessed and channelised in a creative way.

During the Mandal agitation, I vividly remember the ruckus due to stone pelting, smashing and burning, tear gas shelling and people running helter-skelter. Our college field was filled with gun-toting police personnel on one side, firing in the air and agitating students on the other side throwing petrol bombs. As the only lady Associate Advisor of the Students Union, I barged into the field and stood in the middle, placating and talking to the students and policemen. It seemed some higher force impelled me to rush in, to face and handle the crisis. By Divine Grace, the situation was saved and there was no casualty.

The scenes of student agitation during our student days flooded my mind. I distinctly remember how our revered teacher from the English Department, Prof. Sarbaswar Das protected the students by risking his own life, bleeding and with tears in his eyes, he said, "I will not allow anyone to touch my students who are my children", echoing Mahatma Gandhi's words that "parents are our first teachers and teachers are our second parents". Prof. Sarbeswar Das was not only a mentor, guide and spiritual guru but also a source of inspiration; he was a fountainhead of learning, physically frail with tremendous mental strength and moral courage.

The English Department was called the Royal Department, elitist and it was said that one can smell students and teachers of English Literature by their conduct, halo and aura. It was also commonly believed and said that teachers are discussed in dining halls and parlours.

My teaching, research experience and other activities in the English Department of Ravenshaw college gave me great job satisfaction, a sense of fulfilment, the courage and confidence to face the challenges of life and understand characters, situations and circumstances better, apart from helping me to communicate and interact with people in India and abroad as English is a rich and global language. It gives me great pleasure and pride to say that I have chosen the right profession inspired by my dedicated and exemplary teachers.

Most importantly, *bidyadaan* (imparting knowledge) is known as a great *daan* as once the soul leaves the body, it cannot take even a thread, it carries only *karma*, *samskaras*, impressions, *gyaan* and *bidya* (learning) from generation to generation, birth to birth.

[Dr. Papiya Ray is an erudite academician. She has penned many articles that are published in various journals and newspaper. She superannuated as the Principal, Dhenkanal Autonomous College.] □

My Alma Mater

Dr. Rashmi Mishra
B.A.: 1969-1971
Teachership at Ravenshaw: 1986-1993,1994-1997

Ah! Dear Ravenshaw, My Alma Mater!
Memories cascade into soft moments
of sublime happiness

As I recollect!
Born amidst your regal majesty …
Propelled the sojourn
The sojourn of life and living
of nobility, of wisdom.

Toddler in me rolled … rolling on your luxurious lawns

The recollection – reminding of your SUBLIME SPIRIT

Invisible yet all pervasive!

In solitude, I recollect the flowers of many hues –
Dancing in finesse to the soft fragrant "melodies of breeze".

"As I tip-toed and swirled",
to the birds eve song

Your eternal beauty …
the tall roofs,
the regal bearing,
the royalty …

Reminds of yesteryears!

As today I wander here …
Memories come flooding by
to a life that has always been
entwined with my Alma Mater – Ravenshaw

[Dr. Rashmi Mishra, is an accomplished educator having taught English literature in various colleges and universities for thirty-five years. She writes poems both in English and Odia. At present, she is a member of many organisations, which works on education, women and children issues.] □

'My Ravenshaw' – a Personal Tribute

Ms. Shanta Acharya
B.A.: 1970-72, M.A.: 1972-74

One of my earliest memories of Ravenshaw College as a child was its imposing façade. The ceremonial cannons added an element of grandeur. One felt the presence of history, especially on formal occasions such as the Republic Day celebrations or the Indian Science Congress Association's gathering in 1962. The neatly manicured lawns and garden with its sun dial at the centre, leading to the Kanika Library, gifted by the Maharaja of Kanika, Sri Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo, was the pièce de résistance. Ravenshaw had the unique distinction of being one of three colleges in the country to have been awarded a national honour by the Government of India with a commemorative stamp on 24 December 1978.

Every Ravenshawvian owes gratitude and thanks to the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, HH Shri Krushna Chandra Bhanjdeo, for his insight and financial support in establishing a major educational institution for what was then known as Orissa. He did not want the institution to be named after him. Instead, it was named after the officiating commissioner at the time, Thomas Edward Ravenshaw, to commemorate his services to the cause of education in the state. It is worth the mention that my paternal grandfather, Paramananda Acharya, who was born in Mayurbhanj, on graduating from Kolkata University with honours and studying for his Master's, was persuaded by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj to give up his studies and work instead with the renowned archaeologist, Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda. After the princely state of Mayurbhanj became part of Orissa under the Indian Union in 1949, my grandfather became the Superintendent of Archaeology, Museum and Research at Ravenshaw College. During his tenure, the department evolved into the present-day Odisha State Museum, where he served as Superintendent.

My maternal grandfather, Ratnakar Sharangi, was an exemplary alumnus of Ravenshaw, where he studied mathematics. He went on to hold several important administrative positions in the then Government of Orissa, serving with distinction in all his many assignments, from Secretary of Education, and Finance to Health, from Home Secretary, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Chairman Board of

Revenue, Revenue Commissioner to Chief Secretary. A deeply principled man, he was known for his compassion and understanding, humanity and integrity, which made him an exemplary human being.

While every stage of one's life is important, experiences in childhood and early youth leave a deeper impact. Ravenshaw played an integral role in those formative years. Alma Mater is indeed the right word – 'nourishing mother'! I lived on the campus with my parents and three brothers. My father, Brundaban Chandra Acharya, spent his entire career as an academic at Ravenshaw, where he founded the department of Geography, the first of its kind in Odisha. He was also responsible for the supervision of some of the men's hostels, where he helped students beyond the call of duty. A consummate organiser, he was variously in charge of gardens, sports, convocations and related activities. My father was so handsome, kind and considerate he was known as the 'Prince of Mayurbhanj'. They, he and my mother, Rashmirekha, beautiful and gifted, provided us with a home and childhood to remember.

So many members of my family were so closely involved with Ravenshaw that it is not possible to ignore that fact. My uncle, Satyananda Acharya, was the youngest professor in the department of Geology before he moved to Vani Vihar, where he retired as the Vice Chancellor of Utkal University. My maternal uncle, JitendriyaSharangi, was a professor in the department of Statistics before he moved to Vani Vihar. Other family members such as Rabinarayan Nanda and Sachidananda Mishra also served as lecturers in the department of Chemistry at Ravenshaw. Growing up in such a world, Ravenshaw felt like home.

I studied at Ravenshaw, so did my three brothers – Bikash, Susanta and Sanjay. Bikash, my older brother, left to study and work in the UK and became a successful Orthopaedic surgeon with his practice in Harley Street. Susanta was a well-known sportsman, he represented Ravenshaw and the then State of Orissa on several occasions in cricket and athletics. He went on to serve the Human Resources Department of Indian Oil Corporation. Sanjay represented Ravenshaw and Utkal University in badminton from 1977-83. Later, he served as Professor and Head of the P.G. Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Utkal University, Vani Vihar. All our lives were involved with education and Ravenshaw played a key part. I am still discovering the ways in which Ravenshaw made me.

As I studied English, and the department played an influential role in my life, it is heartening to note that M.A. classes in English commenced at Ravenshaw in 1922,

thanks to the generosity of Maharani Parvati Devi, the Queen of Sonepur. The English department during my time was located on the second floor of the Commerce building next to the sprawling playing field, part of the Chakkar Padia gift to the College in 1921. I grew up with the field as a character in the play of our lives. Sometimes the field was a memory of voices, sports celebrations, sound of cricket bats, '*How's that's*', while the score of test matches being played elsewhere in the country were monitored on radio, which remained invisible yet audible to everyone in the class. The lecturers, competing for attention, did not stand a chance.

Sometimes, the monsoon rains went wild with lightning and thunder delivering drama beyond our expectation. Once lightning struck the iron scaffolding of the new Men's hostel, which was in the process of being built. The entire structure turned red as if it had caught fire. I remember watching that scene in wonder from the English department, thinking of Captain Ahab. From time to time, forgotten faces appear to greet me in the corridors. So many of my teachers and friends have moved on to carry on with their journey in other worlds.

There are many I owe thanks to. Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who made a difference. The list is long, but here are some I remember with affection and regards. Mahendra Kumar Rout was one – an outstanding Principal, he was an able administrator and researcher. He cared deeply for the College and seemed to know everyone, had a pulse on every heartbeat. I am grateful to my esteemed teachers in the English department – Sarbeswar Dash, Harendra Mohanty, Biyot Kesh Tripathy, Soubhagya Mishra, Paresh Rout, Sushama Tej, D. K. Ray and Deba Patnaik. It is not possible to account for the many ways in which they contributed to the educational and cultural life of Ravenshaw.

Ravenshaw nurtured many great writers and poets including Gopabandhu Das, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Sachidananda Rout Ray, Gopinath Mohanty, Sitakanta Mohapatra, Prativa Ray. Among those who wrote in English, Jayanta Mahapatra, is widely known. In my time, in the English department, there were several poets, including Deba Patnaik, Soubhagya Mishra, Bibhu Padhi and Chinmoy Jena. The last time I was at Ravenshaw, it was at the invitation of Devdas Chhotray, also a poet, to do a poetry reading in the English department. He was the first Vice Chancellor of the newly established Ravenshaw University. It was an honour and a privilege. It was also my privilege to serve Ravenshaw as a lecturer in the department of English before I was awarded a National Scholarship to study abroad. My life changed when I was accepted by Oxford and I left in October 1979.

Both as a student and lecturer, I participated in various college activities in arts and culture as well as sports. I was awarded the Rai Bahadur Janakinath Bose Prize for the best all-round student in 1973. It makes me proud that my grandfather, Ratnakar Sharangi, had been awarded the same prize in 1929. I participated in the College's annual Republic Day parades as the flag bearer. I was the sports champion in 1971 and used to hold the College record in long jump and discuss, both must have been long bettered.

My message to students is – the opportunities that the world offers has always come with responsibilities. Today, opportunities have multiplied manifold, significantly enhanced with technological developments. The world is more equal today than it has ever been. Be more responsible in every way – to others as much as to yourself. Remember all life is precious. Make the most of yourself, become the best of who or what you can be. I wish the English department and Ravenshaw University every success in finding a fulfilling and pioneering path through the next hundred years!

[Ms. Shanta Acharya Shanta Acharya has the rare achievement of being published in fields as diverse as poetry, fiction, literary studies and finance.Her latest publication is *What Survives Is The Singing* while her first novel was, *A World Elsewhere*, which was published in 2015.Her articles and interviews have appeared in various international publications.]



Venerating the Hundredth Year of the Department of English

Prof. Kalyani Samantray
B.A.: 1970-72; M.A.:1972-74
Teacher: 1976-78, 1982-86

Let me first of all thank the organisers of the centenary celebration for their open-hearted invitation to join the event, and extend my cordial felicitation to all those associated with this glorious occasion. I heartily appreciate the accomplishments of each member of the faculty, and their endeavour for the department's impressive services to higher education.

Turning to my personal celebrations...

When I joined in 1969 as a student, this university was Ravenshaw College, its motto being 'Knowledge is Power', the alma mater of thousands reaping the fruitfulness of a holistic education and humanistic values provided from years of yore. Higher education in Odisha was a synonym for 'Ravenshaw College'. This institution has shaped all who came under her canopy into the humans that the alumni were and are today. Some have been outstanding academics; others have excelled in many different vocations - freedom fighters, social workers, poets, writers, visionaries, creative and performing artists, media personnel, lawyers, entrepreneurs, scientists, officers in the government and the armed forces, bankers, doctors, technocrats, consultants, and you name it. This institution made us all ready to take on the world and make it our oyster in our own terms.

As a teenager in the Pre-Professional course, I was overawed by the monumental buildings, the impeccable grassy rectangular courtyard with the sun-dial, the breathtaking hush of the library, the sprawling fields for sports, and above all, the erudition of the teaching faculties. It dawned upon me over a period of time why the Ravenshawvians were considered the first citizens of Odisha. Next year, I joined the Honours course in English, abandoning the idea of pursuing medicine as a career. It must have been the subtle interference of Providence to keep me linked to this institution, and to the Department of English that equipped me to be a radical liberal all my life.

The lasting impression that I have of Professor Sarbeswar Das in class was his passion for literature, and, viewed at intensely with my neophyte eyes, this person in

rough khadi dhoti-kurta embodied the fundamental human values. He limped a little in one leg that I heard happened when he confronted the police, protecting protesting students inside the college campus, and got hit with a baton!

Prof. Harendra Mohanty happened to be a special favourite of mine who sipped Donne to enjoy his poems like ancient wine so much that I shared the sensation to be in love with the metaphysicals all the way! Prof. Nrusingha Rath, a celebrated romantic poet, taught us – no prizes for guessing! The daffodils, the clouds, the frost, the English autumn, the skylark (no matter none of these are ever seen in Odisha), and so on, their incredible charm never reached a terminal point. We were transported to a different realm with our cuckoos singing in the branches next to the classroom windows.

All the teachers were superb in their domains, and to mention a few, Prof. M. J. Das, Prof. M. Q. Khan, Prof. D. K. Ray, Prof. J. N. Patnaik, Prof. Satya Shankar Mishra, Prof. Debendra Sarangi, Prof. Ramachandra Tripathy, all were unpretentious and sensitive to student needs regardless of their scholarship and excellent teaching styles.

None of or professors were prodigal mines of fashionable slogans from critical theories; neither were there ready notes available to pass on to us through the primary school learning method of dictation or rote-learning. They displayed their individual consummate skills of text exploration and trained us how to enquire into British and American literary norms from the centuries, shaping our impressionable minds to appreciate the craft of writing. I learnt theory application to unravel different meanings of texts much later with a lot of ease due to these text investigation skills I developed early on.

The professors were also quite strict so far as discipline and punctuality were the issues. I with two of my friends were once scrapped from entering a class for we came after the teacher had just crossed the threshold. Yet, their abounding love and their concern for our wellbeing are the blessings we were privileged to receive.

It is encouraging that the members of the department continue down the years in that tradition to groom great young champions of the present time.

I was fortunate that for the second year, E.L.T. and Linguistics was offered as a special paper in M.A. in the department, the premises of my early infatuation that grew in ardour and flourished to an enduring obsession.

As undergraduates and post-graduates, my class was unique in organising department events regularly listening to delightful talks from Prof. S. Murthy of Physics

and Prof. Bibekanand Mukherjee of Bengali and such others along with our professors, Prof. Sujit Mohanty enthralling us with his vibrant love songs over dinner. We won laurels participating in plays and performances, sports, literary, and a variety of extra-curricular activities. Our camaraderie bloomed through fun, fights, leg-pulling, serious studies and a generous support for each other.

I joined the department as a teacher two times, thoroughly uncomfortable with the hiccups of a first-timer, and, later, quietly absorbing the mature nuances of distinguished colleagues in the department staff lounge. Some students eventually became very close to the extent of playing pranks with me, yet preserving the 'laxmanarekha' of respect. I will never forget the ever-cheerful Manu, persuading us to have tea before and after classes every day, inviting us from the far-side of the corridor when the college reopened after vacations, hands folded near his forehead, and, greeting us, "Happy to meet we, happy to meet we!"

The right and profound education, and the values and the ethics that I imbibed from teachers, colleagues and friends in this department have forged a strong, hard-working, determined, optimistic person out of the impulsive greenhorn that I was when I joined here. I would not have been where I am or what I am in life without these experiences.

The one hundredth year celebration of the English Department is an exclusive opportunity to reflect on that fabulous time. And how fortunate I have been. I might someday produce a tome on it!

I hope we will carry on to empower ourselves in our knowledge and our togetherness! May the department's journey continue!

[Prof. Kalyani Samantray is a renowned academician whose books are read by the students across Odisha. She has penned many erudite articles as well as books. Prof. Samantray has supervised many Research Scholars.]

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Department of English and I: A Teacher Speaks

Mr. Rajani Kanta Nayak
B.A.: 1970-72, M.A.: 1972-74
Teacher: 1981-91, 2000-2004, 2014-22 (Visiting Faculty)

If a man could swear allegiance to a family other than where he is born and brought up in a natural way - for me it will be Ravenshaw in general and the Department of English to be more specific. I feel drawn to call it my family for not only nearly three decades of my association with it both as a student and a faculty but also for - how shall I put it - I think I will be clueless for an identity if it were not for my association with Ravenshaw in its three 'avataars' – as a College, as an Autonomous Institute of singular excellence till the end of 20th Century and as a University from 2006. The fact that I have been a part of this Unique 'Building in Red' through it all emboldens me to narrate my feelings and experiences, sweet-n-sour in the following few lines.

I'm well aware that people evince a universal dislike for autobiographical essays being too long. Hence I propose to restrict my endeavour to three to four distinct phases - i.e., my stint at the Department of English as a student and talk about my Teachers, Classmates and my experience in grooming myself; secondly about the years I spent there as a faculty leading to make me as I am today both during the two decades I spent there officially and the greater part of another decade I spent there as a Visiting Faculty. And through this all I am going to show my gratitude to this Department without which I will be at a loss to spell out an identity for myself. In the process I will be failing in my duty if I do not talk about the colleagues, teachers, visiting professors - and last but not the least - about the atmosphere of the Department and its special aura and the way it has shaped me and my career. In other words, I can say that I am what I am today for, by and of the Department of English at Ravenshaw, my alma mater and my field of work at one go.

My earliest memory takes me to the later half of 1971 when, freshly retired from Judiciary Services my father took me to Ravenshaw College for admission into English Hons. there. Those days there were only 32 seats in English Hons. and to my discomfiture, all the seats had been filled up. Luckily for us Dr. M. K. Rout, the-then Principal was a relation and father also knew Dr. Bidhu Bhushan Das, the-then Director of Higher

Education, Odisha since his college days. So ultimately I was able to pursue my career as a student of English with special permission from Dr. Das. The capacity of Hons. students at Ravenshaw got increased to 48 from the following academic session. And I remember Sarbeswar Dash, a senior faculty whom again father knew from his service days at Puri. Sir told my father who expressed my discomfiture and diffidence as I had migrated from Sambalpur University and my batchmates here had already completed one year of Honours study. Sir, who later would be my most revered Professor, eased my feelings saying that the more I read the better it would be for me. That was a lesson I will remember till I close my eyes – that the more you read, the better you become. Baptised thus, I warmed up to the task at hand – and acquitted myself as well as I could – standing 9th in the Utkal University and being the second among my batchmates at Ravenshaw. I remember, another passion was proving to be demanding enough to draw my special attention then. I was trying to be good in the playing field as well. Till I came to join Ravenshaw I was an avid Cricketer – a passion I had nurtured since school days and was, at one time hoping to be called to the nets of Odisha School Cricket and later, as a spinner-cum-middle order batter I hoped to be called for consideration for the state team. It was not to be as I was playing for smaller districts like Dhenkanal and Balangir and the selectors never thought me good enough for a call up. And on coming to Ravenshaw when I found out two of my classmates to be playing for Odisha in Ranji Trophy, I thought it to better to look for fresher pastures – something that materialized when I took to lawn tennis. I started out little late there. I was around 20 when I took to learning how to play tennis at Barabati Stadium and alternated my time between sports and study – i.e. tennis and English. At studies I was never brilliant but managed to be among top three or four in my class. Tennis however gave me a new identity as I became singles champion at Ravenshaw and repeated the feat through my UG and P.G. in English course – earning an identity all for myself as Singles and Doubles Champion at Ravenshaw for three consecutive years, becoming Cuttack No. 1 and State No. 2 – in fact representing university and later Odisha in Inter-State Meets and East-Zone Championship of the game. This passion for Tennis gave me such a cherished identity that more people knew me as a Tennis enthusiast for I went on to rule the Tennis scenario as a top player for a decade and did a lot for promotion of the game at grass-root level for budding Tennis lovers organising coaching camps, All India championships etc. for the next decade as Honorary Secretary, Cuttack District Tennis Association, Treasurer cum Joint Secretary, Odisha Tennis Association etc. in due course. This diversion took its toll and came largely to affect my career as a Faculty in English which I eventually became after passing M.A. in 1974 and starting out my career as a

Lecturer in English from August, 1975 – first in noted Government colleges like B.J.B., J.K.B.K. and then as a Faculty in English at Ravenshaw – something for which the foundation store was firmly laid at U.G. and P.G. Departments of English of Ravenshaw College.

As a student at Ravenshaw College, I must admit that my experience was one of awe and wonder. I wondered at the sheer vastness of the campus, its lawn and rows of flowering plants interceding the majestic rectangular chunk of land between the Arts Block and the Science Block with two hostels in the eastern and western flanks – then the newly constructed Commerce Block with our Department on the top floor and then the other three to four hostels for girls and boys and the formidable play ground where hockey, football, cricket and many other games were played by the students almost throughout the year. There was a college gym where body building and physical exercises were carried on under the supervision of a PET. But what really took my breath away was the masterly teachers and their awesome commitment to teaching in classrooms which they pursued like devout worshippers in a temple – here, the Temple of Learning i.e. Ravenshaw College.

There has not been a single day in my nearly three decades of teaching English that I have not remembered my teachers at Department of English even while engaging classes first sparingly, as there were twenty three odd teachers along with a Professor when I joined it in July 1981 as a faculty where I could engage classes as my seniors allotted me to the time nearing my superannuation in the last half of 2010 when the strength of faculties having dwindled to just three of us with a Head of Department, I would be engaging some fifteen to sixteen assignments at U.G. Hons, P.G. and MPhil level engaging five periods a day and that too on a trot without a hiccup. After Ravenshaw I spent the last four months of my 36-year-old career as the HOD of English, Ramadevi College, Bhubaneswar which by now has been elevated to a university. And as I was saying – there was not a single day in my classroom performances that I did not remember my teachers who were instrumental in making me an English teacher. How can I forget Sarbeswar Sir who to me was a career definer, a philosopher and a guide – what with his erudition, his fluency, his oratorial skills – and above all the 'plain living and high thinking' attitude of a saintly philosopher committed to classroom proficiency like few others! Honestly I would love to admit that it was he and the other great teachers of ours then who made me choose to be a teacher. There was Harendra Sir (Prof. Harendra Mohanty) with his witty rejoinders and near-perfect explanation of wide variety of texts (it was widely believed that you read nearly ten books on the subject in his classes). He was analytical, crisp and to the point, rare attributes of a great teacher. And then –

can one afford not to talk of the handsome and stylish Professor Dr. Biyot Kesh Tripathy – sibling to Dr. Byomakesh Tripathy (an avid Theatre and Film exponent of the time)? He spoke and behaved every inch like an English professor and was breathtaking in his role as a performer in our classes – making us visualise the Dramas he taught extending our vocabulary and showing us fresh dimensions to analysing a text. Dr. Tripathy was inseparable from the charismatic Dr. Deb Pattnaik another unforgettable teacher – unorthodox, intriguing and enigmatic to speak the least. He was not much of a class-room teacher like Dr. Mahajiteswar Das, Dr. Debendra Kumar Ray, Mr. Nursingha Ratha or Mr. Satya Shankar Mishra and many others but he made up amply by his charisma and verve. We never tired of jokes and humorous anecdotes circling around him (I have often narrated them much to the delightful entertainment of my students in classes later). In our P.G. days some of our seniors joined the Department as our teachers – a brilliant orator like Late Dev Anand Mishra, cricketing legends like Sujit Mohanty, Pranab Das and Chinmoy Jena who made the academic clock tick by with healthy flourish making us feel even as we pursued excellence as our teachers had shown us. Other teachers like Mr. Paresh Rout and Dr. Soubhagya Mishra were also teaching at other illustrious colleges like B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar. They whetted up our appetite for more of literature as did the likes of Prof. Trilochan Mishra, Dr. Prafulla Pati, Dr. Madhusudan Pati, Dr. Bidhu Bhusan Das, Dr. Pravat Nalini Das, Dr. Jatin Mohanty, Dr. Prafulla Mohanty etc. who taught at Sambalpur, Utkal and Berhampur universities. Though not lucky to have been their students in a classroom I have relished my friends narrating the expert flourish with which they used to teach English and shall always call them important members of our Teachers fraternity available to me and my friends in classes to our generation – the 70s batch.

Now that I have talked about a special breed of teachers who both inducted and christened me to the delectable study of English Literature – a mission and project very dear to my mind and heart – I feel drawn upon to talk about the years I have spent at Ravenshaw as a teacher of English – starting with timid, tottering steps only to be nurtured, shaped and strengthened over years to handle authors and texts that have instilled a power into my modest ambition to fathom, in here and acquire the requisite skills to excel as a class room analyser of texts from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Camus and Kafka – from Dostoevsky to Marquez, Lessing, Graham Green to Saramago, Mo Yan, Missima and Ishiguro. In fact, it has been a long and fulfilling journey which has, to speak the least refreshed, rejuvenated and elevated me to study the kaleidoscopic human drama with its intricacies and restorative bliss. In the same breath I swear the majestic heights to which study of Poetry and Drama have lifted me enough to keep

sharing their ecstasy and thrills with numerous lovers of literature including my beloved students. With each passing year my passion to read more about world literature has enhanced itself and deepened, and as a result – what started as an alien thought in my initial stint slowly spread its warm, all embracing hands and clasped my inquisitive spirit in an insatiable quest that both fascinated as well as fulfilled me. My first 10 year stint – the 80s to be exact, was like a golden period in the Department. We the 23 odd knights sitting around the long rectangular table in the Staff Common Room of Department of English while the Professor (Sonepur Chair for English Studies)'s chamber lay opposite ours. We dared not enter the Professor's chamber which was sometimes used by very senior colleagues who sat with the Professor. The Professors I remember most since my college days in 1972-74 to the 80's are Professor Sarbeswar Dash, Professor Harendra Mohanty and then Professor Qamruddin Khan. They all were my teachers as I have already said and of the three I have worked most under the leadership of Dr. Qamruddin Khan during the 80's. Before this time Dr. Qamruddin Khan had played a lead role in conducting the Golden Jubilee of the Department sometime in 1973-74 when we were students and Jayant Kumar Biswal was our seminar secretary. Jayant (Raja) and Sanjukta Rout, a lady classmate would later become good literary artists in Odia and make us proud by bagging the coveted state Sahitya Academy Award – Jayant for his essays and Sanjukta for Short Stories. Most of my batch mates became teachers of English teaching English at various Government and Private Colleges of Odisha including me in so many Government colleges and mostly in Ravenshaw where I taught officially for twenty years in two stints. Among many other batchmates of Ravenshaw who made themselves known were – Shanta who was the topper of our batch and went abroad. I heard she had joined a Bank in the UK and has published a volume of poetry. Niranjan Mohanty became a Professor of Creative Literature at Shantiniketan, Hara Prasad Parichha Pattnaik became a poet of repute and Secretary, Sahitya Academy, Kalyani Samantray became a Professor at Vani Vihar and Bijay Das, Professor at Burdwan University, West Bengal, Dr. Guru Charan Behera became Professor of English at BHU. Some other friends became Principals of Private colleges in Odisha like L. C. Patnaik, Mahendra Mohanty, Amarendra Sarangi etc. Of the friends mentioned Niranjan and Mahendra are no more and are sorely missed by us. Braja became secretary, CHSE an academic administrator.

Talking of my time as a teacher of English I would love to talk of my colleagues who spent the time sharing space with me in the Department. I have said earlier that I taught English at Ravenshaw officially in two stints – i.e. 1981-91 and then from 2000

to 2010. During the first stint – I carry lovely vibes about my colleagues and the Department of that time. Our department then was literally a bee-hive of Teachers of many shades and hues under one Professor. During this first phase of my stay there Professor changed hands from Prof. Sarbeswar Dash to Prof. Harendra Mohanty until we came to be working with Prof. Qamruddin Khan. We were about twenty-three in number with Dr. Paresh Chandra Rout, Shri Dinesh Pattnaik, Dr. Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi, Dr. Sadhananand Parida, Dr. Sadananda Mishra, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Mishra, Dr. D. K. Ray, Dr. Mahajiteswar Das etc. The younger faculties included Shri. Chinmoy Jena, Mr. Fredrick Wright, Dr. Bibhu Prasad Padhi, myself, Dr. Guru Charan Behera, Shri. TapankantiPattnaik, Dr. Debapriya Dash and the lady faculties – Dr. Alaka Ray, Dr. Papiya Ray, Smt. Indira Singh, Dr. Nandita Mohapatra, Dr. Sumitra Mishra, Dr. Rashmi Mishra etc. If I am missing a name or two I may be excused for the inadvertence. We the departmental colleagues had a golden time of togetherness, more so in this first stint of my teachership at Ravenshaw. We had regular discussions on various topics and there was no topic that was not being discussed then. In this our chief co-ordinator was junior friend-cum-colleague Debapriya Dash who perhaps had been trained to relish such ambience by his Late father Lokaratna Dr. Kunja Bihari Dash who, as he told me, was witness to such semi-academic sessions in the august company of celebrities like Dr. Sisir Ghosh and others when he was Professor of Odia Department at Shantiniketan. Debapriya was the life spark of these sessions and thanks to him all of us felt drawn to participate in these discussions. One among us would make a presentation and all of us would share in the discussion that followed covering so many aspects of literature as it should be in any institute or university worth its name. The discussions often were carried on long after the duty hours when we enjoyed bara, samosa and tea as we talked and listened to each other covering topics ranging from various literary artists to the newest trends emerging in literature all over the world then. We developed a fellow feeling for each other and needless to stay, were with each other in hours of need both when called for in a family celebration of one to when the chips were down with another. I have always felt literature to be a way of life and a sort of panacea against all odds in life and I must admit, my interaction with my colleagues in the department and the massive readings it prompted and encouraged in me (which I follow like a religious credo till date) went on to cement my faith in literary values that time cannot dent. It was a pleasure working in a department that included, along with brilliant teachers some of whose names I have taken earlier performers in other fields as well. If Sarbeswar Sir's proud confession ("I had a copy of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* for 17 years in my Punjabi pocket") inspired us to know what commitment to

teaching should entail, it was Harendra Sir's witty rejoinders and one liners we never tired of talking about at length. Sir never articulated English like Dr. Deb Pattnaik or Dr. B. K. Tripathy but who cared about pronunciation when the universal experience with him was being overwhelmed by witty and apt analysis of texts and brilliant ideation? Close on their heels in our admiration was the chaste, flawless articulation of Prof. B. K. Tripathy who spoke perhaps the most stylish English in our time and Dr. Deb Pattnaik who was always a timeless enigma. We all knew he didn't relish being in a class but who can forget the experience when he took one? His poetry was published in the best literary magazine in India, then – "The Illustrated Weekly of India" a feat he accomplished even before famous Jayanta Mahapatra was to make his poetry felt in literary circles. And the fruit of Dr. Tripathy's collaborative endeavour with Jayanta Mohapatra and Dr. Deb Patnaik – a biennial journal dedicated chiefly to poetry – "Gray Book" to be exact, has had few equals since. But then I am perhaps getting a little mixed up for while elaborating my relationship with my illustrious colleagues I can hardly get over my encomium for our stars. I mean our teachers who have been exemplary performers in their fields. Among other exceptional teachers – there was Dr. D. K. Ray and Dr. Mahajiteswar Das (both of whom were my teachers). They were both very meticulous and always impressed us with their sincerity as classroom teachers. I remember how in one literary session in the Staff Common Room like we often had now and then, Dr. D. K. Ray presented a 30-minute talk on Modern Poetry and when asked to sum it up how Dr. Mahajiteswar Das quoted Dr. Ray's lecture almost word by word. Then there was Mr. Paresh Chandra Rout who joined us towards the last phase of my first stint. After Dr. B. K. Tripathy I think he can be remembered as a teacher who did wonderful service to teaching Drama especially Shakespearean Plays with his big baritone and threadbare presentations. Sir was near his retirement and I had a glimpse of his excellence as a Drama Teacher as he explained to us in the Common Room how Lady Macbeth can be said to be 'more sinned against than sinning'. SadhanParida was an extremely friendly teacher and a wonderful conversationalist who impressed me with his intense reading. Before his untimely death in a road mishap he often delighted me with his post card letters (when I was posted to Dhenkanal College around 1996 after my first stint at Ravenshaw) which would contain just a memorable extract from one of the latest books he would be reading then. This and the many other books he has shared with me make it very hard for me to believe that he is no more among us. Dinesh Pattanayak is another elder brotherly colleague I remember. He may not be a favourite with students like Sadhan Parida or Fredrick Wright but was insightful enough to help us teachers perform better in classes by giving us important hints especially when it

came to handling Poetry in class. He was also a good practicing homeopath and an astrologer whose clients, as he joked once before me, increased as his predictions failed. Not that I believed him but my purpose is to bring out a lighter side of his otherwise serious and stern demeanour. Then there was Dr. Ramesh Chandra Panigrahi whose memory is etched in me as a curious combination of confidence, arrogance and endless humility. I call him my "Theatre Guru" as he has seduced me into study of Drama. In fact by his timely advices I must have read 40 to 50 Dramas especially on my summer and winter visits to American Study Research Centre at Hyderabad enroute to pursuing my Ph.D. dissertation on Drama under the supervision of Dr. Prafulla Chandra Kar who was a teaching Professor of English and American studies at M. S. University, Baroda then. It is a pity I went so far yet not near enough as curtailing of staff at Ravenshaw in my 2nd stint of teachership at Ravenshaw literally reduced the Teacher's strength to three with one HOD and resultant academic pressure (I had to handle some fifteen to sixteen assignments in higher classes up to M.Phil. on a trot) and I could not complete my Ph.D. But I have no regrets for I have laboured to surpass mediocrity and have grown empowered as a class-room teacher of some excellence and I am proud to announce that I owe it all to the stints of teaching I have enjoyed (20 years in two stints to 8 to 10 years more as a Visiting Faculty in the like of which, I was active up to 31st of December 2021) teaching at Ravenshaw. In fact I am happy and sad that my students have often professed their unstinted love for me as a classroom teacher teaching Poetry, Fiction and Drama perhaps in excess of my expectations in as varied and as multi furious ways as I could. (something I would love to do till my last breath) and sad as I couldn't keep my promise made to Ramesh Bhaina and myself and complete my Ph.D. In poetry the colleagues I am grateful to for my range and widened canvass would be (after my teacher) two elderly teacher-like contemporaries. It is Chinmoy Jena (my relative cum Mentor) who exposed me to continental poetry. If he helped me with Quasimodo, Elytis and the like Bibhu Prasad Padhi took me to studying Unfaretti, Vasco Popa, Pablo Neruda and the like. Besides, my sparring teacherly rivalry with TapanPattnaik (my friend and batch mate of a colleague who was a great favourite with students for the articulation and suavity with which he handled poetry in class) was like a spur. All this and my own study (initiated early in me by Poetry-loving colleagues) helped me feel quite at ease to teach varieties of poets like Neruda, Jimenez, Judith Wright and Octavio Paz in classrooms and my students gave me a helping hand by being appreciative listeners. I also taught Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Eliot, Yeats, Ezekiel, Kamla Das, Eurice De Souza, A. K. Merhotra and last but not the least, Jayant Mohapatra and must admit here Jayant Mohapatra opened a whole new vista before

me and I discovered how poetry can be always an encounter with the Truth. For all this again, I am grateful to this Department and its wonderful teachers and colleagues who made me catapult myself notches higher than I thought I could. I also remember late Sri Debanand Mishra and Fredrick Wright who shone bright as teachers. Frederick Wright was the only Anglo-Indian among us who excelled with his British Accent and DebanandBhaina matched him in stylish articulation and no wonder they had their students awe struck at their chaste and sweeping flow of words. We also had a few lady colleagues like Dr. Alaka Ray, Dr. Papiya Ray, Dr. Nandita Mohapatra, Smt. Indira Singh, Smt. Rashmi Mishra, Dr. Pratiti Kanchan and Dr. Sumitra Mishra etc. May be I am missing out a name or two but they were all sincere teachers and made our common room feel like a family with their feminine presences. Rabi Mishra taught linguistics mostly and young Debapriya was a connoisseur of sorts who is a must in all the Literary sessions we had in the department from time to time. Can I forget his humorous anecdotes/barbs? My memories of the department in the second stint (2000 - 2010) is that it was a little more hectic and mixed up. The first stint was memorable also for the many seminars and symposia arranged - more so during the time with Qamruddin Khan as the Professor and head of the department. Qamruddin Sir was certainly not as popular and sought after as a teacher but he was a tremendous organiser and the Department got huge publicity during his time as professor and head of the department. He called so many celebrities to either address a departmental seminar or give a lecture/talk. Thus we had Nobel Laureate William Golding who read excerpts from his novel *Lord of the Flies* in a special session. The celebrated poet Padmashree Jayanta Mahapatra was almost a regular visitor to the annual day celebrations of the department. I remember among others the famous poet A. J. Young, critic Christopher Norris, Prof. Shiv. K. Kumar, unimportant D. H. Lawrence scholar and a much published poet to boot. Besides, there was Padma Bhushan C. D. Narasimhaiya, the famous son of the founder of Research Institute 'Dhvanyaloka' of Mysore who came to address us and many more celebrated talkers whose names I cannot mention here for lack of space. Dr. Bijoy Das, my classmate who was to be Professor of English at Burdwan University, West Bengal and Prof. Qamruddin Khan collaborated to make a research Association: 'Researchers' Association' publishing their annual journals by the name of 'The Critical Endeavour' catering to the needs of many budding researchers of our state. These two who perhaps were not as liked as they could have been among other colleagues made ample amends by their pursuit of research at its purest level conducting literary and critical meets, inviting professors from all over India for talks, churning out Ph.D. dissertations and pursuing the higher goals at surprisingly frequent intervals. Around 2000 onwards,

Ravenshaw became first a 'Centre for Excellence' and then turned to a full-fledged unitary university around 2006. The department, meanwhile had seen many professors and H.O.D.s. Dr. Prafula Kumar Mohanty, Dr. Sudhir Joshi, Dr. Bijay Bal, Professor Suman Mohapatra and Professor A. K. Purohit had become the Heads of the Department by turns. Of these five, Dr. Prafula Kumar Mohanty and Dr. Bijay Bal had become Principals before the declaration of Ravenshaw as a University. Prof. Suman Mohapatra and Prof. Amulya Kumar Purohit had their stints as Director of Higher Education, Government of Odisha and Dr. Qamruddin Khan had adorned the office of the Vice Chancellor of Berhampur University – high attainments for teaching members of the department indeed. Even Dr. Gangadhar Mishra also had a short stint as DHE Odisha after he became a Professor at Sambalpur. Ravenshaw became a university in 2006. With Mr. Devdas Chhotoray as the first Vice Chancellor of the nascent Ravenshaw University. Our department also witnessed a sea change with new recruited members. Shri Ravi Narayan Mishra was replaced by Dr. Dipti Ranjan Patnaik from BHU as the new professor and HOD. Along with Dipti who was certainly a worthy Professor but for his caustic tongue which made him slightly unpopular (I have often told him so, for by then I was a senior faculty and he regarded me as an elder brother) came six more faculties – Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty was the senior most and the present Prof. Dr SambitPanigrahi was also one of them. Dipti was a creative writer and a good researcher who brought in an air of research in its recent shape and contours. Research became the new slogan and in the heat I felt and so did old timers like me that classroom teaching took a backseat. Not that I have any grouse against Research for I do continue to update myself with literature in its various new avatars but certainly the onus had shifted – irretrievably as it were. However, Dipti was a stickler for discipline and credit for activating the alumni association must go to him. Sri Pradosh Mohanty, a '79 batch alumnus was made the President, Dipti the Convenor and I was chosen to become the first Secretary of the Alumni Association of the Department of English, Ravenshaw University. I had no knowledge of Pradosh Babu excepting that he was a close friend of Debapriya Dash, our colleague at Ravenshaw in 80s. But he turned out to be a godsend as he showed an enthusiasm to reorganise our department with logistics and in spirit. My initial misgivings were over for he turned out to be a very friendly advisor and along with help from other Alumni scattered over years and departmental colleagues and hundreds of student volunteers we conducted five Alumni lectures succeeding in giving our Department a much-needed facelift, inviting literary giants to talk to teachers and students in these meets, felicitating distinguished alumni and making our Department as vibrant as we could. After 2015 when we had our fifth alumni meet in the department,

things started drifting a bit and the Association slipped into a limbo. It is heartening to note now that with the proposed Centenary of this glorious Department of ours, the alumni association has been rejuvenated and we propose to celebrate hundred years of our department with much fanfare sometime in September 2022.

Friends, well-wishers and my brothers and sisters of colleagues and members of this august behemoth of our Department of English, I think the time has come to sign off. I am sorry I could not make it shorter as my memories got the better of me. But before I take leave of you all, I would like to acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to the department for having made an apparently small individual like me become empowered by associations and exposures. It has subjected me to both metamorphose and empower me to be called a student-friendly teacher for I think nothing is bigger for the teacher than being cherished, loved and admired by students. I am proud to say that students of mine today are DGs and Chief Secretaries, some of them are pursuing research at illustrious Research institutes like IIT Madras, BHU, Pondicherry and the like. Lastly, I would like to thank my department, its wonderful teachers, my friendly colleagues and above all - my loving and loved students to have shown me the way to live life purposefully. I owe to you all my trophies I have won as a tennis champion and the loving adulation of my students and last but not the least, I am grateful to you my department, for having given me friends, love of books, and the zeal to pursue excellence in life in my own humble way.

My guide of a teacher said, "I want to die with a copy of *Moby Dick* in my hand." I would like to do so not only with a book in my hand but also to breathe my last thinking of you, my department, and the wonderful things you have made me enjoy. Whatever my achievements have been - be it as an AIR or TV commentator of sports like tennis and cricket, be it as a chosen commentator in English of Lord Jagannatha's Car festival in the national hookup or the talks (Educational and Drama). I think it would not have been possible but for you, my department. I hope my teaching brothers and sisters will remember me for making classroom teaching an all-important priority. On hindsight, I want to confess that the waterloos of my career were won both in the Tennis courts of Ravenshaw and the hallowed precincts of our Departmental corridors and classrooms.

I owe to you for all that I am today, my Department. May you grow to fuller heights in days to come.

- Jaya Jagannath

[Mr. Rajani Kanta Nayak has 3 decades of association with the Department of English as a student and teacher. He is an avid sportsperson, commentator for AIR and Doordarshan.]

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Down the Memory Lane

Mr. Jayant K. Biswal
M.A.: 1972-74

Just to reminisce about our department, the department of English, Ravenshaw College, even after long five decades, is such a sweet, rejuvenating experience! Memories are still so vivid, so vibrant!

What wonderful, inspiring teachers we had! With Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, in coarse, crumpled 'dhoti' and 'panjabi' and a pair of worn-out slippers, at the helm! And, as this most unassuming, ordinary-looking man came, slightly limping, on the long corridor of the English department, how we panicked into our classrooms and sat in our seats like docile lambs! And how, as he taught us *Four Quarterts* in his sing song voice, we listened entranced, transported to a far, far mystic realm! He had such a profound influence on all of us!

We had a big faculty of 22 or 23 teachers and every teacher could be distinguished by certain uniqueness. Certain funny things come readily before the mind's eye – Prof. Harendra Mohanty, dressed in immaculate white, always wearing a dry, dispassionate countenance, teaching us metaphysical poetry and impishly smiling whenever any erotic description came in the text; Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, the steadfast puritan, while teaching us *Antony and Cleopatra* line by line surreptitiously skipping the lines, "She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed. He ploughed her, and she cropped"; and ultimately Prof. D. P. Pattanayak, a flamboyant western contrast to Prof. Dash, at times with a pipe in his mouth, teaching us *Waiting for Godot*, not teaching, not explaining anything at all, just reciting the text while striding across the classroom from one end to the other...as if enacting the play himself before us.

In our 6th year we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the department. I was the Secretary of the seminar then and I remember how the whole department with all the teachers and students became one and worked hard to make it a spectacular success.

The department was so close to us that we spent most of our waking hours here. We never bunked classes not because we were very ideal students, not at all, but because we just loved to be there with our teachers and friends. There was a bonding between us and our teachers which continued far beyond our student days.

Now, as I reflect, I feel what a great department was ours! Ah, I belong to a department which has seen its students evolve into great novelists, poets, storytellers, teachers, political leaders, sportsmen, supreme court justices, mystics and the like! The Archives' Gallery is so fabulous!

Sometimes in these twilight days of my life, I ask myself, "Did I have the best years of my life in the English Department of Ravenshaw College?"

And then I whisper to myself, "Yes, this department discovered you and set you on the adventure of life."

[Mr. Jayanta Kumar Biswal is a writer, columnist for Sambad and Odisha Sahitya Akademi award winner. He retired as Reader in English from Dhenkanal Autonomous College and teaches children at an NGO-run school.]

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It was the Best of Times

Dr. Bhagabat Nath
M.A.: 1975

"Whoever is somebody in Odisha must be a Ravenshawvian". This utterance reverberated in most of the speeches delivered by eminent speakers during the Centenary Celebrations of the then Ravenshaw College in 1970. I was a student of Pre-University class then. It is a unique advantage of being a student of Ravenshaw. I could have the opportunity of coming across illustrious personalities and listening to the words of wisdom. Distinguished people from all walks of life took part in the celebrations. A number of academicians, men of letters, statesmen, artists, bureaucrats, and even religious men from the Divine Life Society and the Ramakrishna Mission overwhelmed us with inspiring talks. Most of them, Ravenshawvians in particular, deliberated on the glorious heritage of Ravenshaw. We had the opportunity of coming across Padma Bhushan Dr. Triguna Sen, Union Cabinet Minister for Education, who laid the foundation stone for the Celebrations. Dr. Sen is an outstanding scholar, the first Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University, and the 11th Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. The Celebration was inaugurated by Dr. V. K. R. Rao, a leading Indian Economist and Union Cabinet Minister for Education and Youth Services. The most revered guest who graced the occasion was Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, nicknamed the Frontier Gandhi, an avid Gandhian and an Indian freedom fighter from Afghanistan. It was the time of University Examination. I regretted missing a few occasions of listening to renowned speakers. Since then, I had a desire to study English literature and pursue a career in English teaching.

My desire took roots when I had an opportunity to listen to Prof. Satya Shankar Mishra. I was in the First Year B.A. Class. My friend Golakh Chandra Biswal and I was passing by Room No. 6 of the Main Block where Prof. Mishra was taking a P.G. class. We were stunned by his eloquence and listened to him for half an hour outside the room. We decided to study English Honours. Of course, we had heard about the erudition of legendary professors like Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das, Prof. A. P. O'Brien, and Prof. Prafulla Kumar Pati but by the time I took admission in English Honours class in July, 1970, they were no longer in Ravenshaw.

'It was the best of times'. We had the privilege of being taught by eminent teachers. Prof. Sarbeswar Das, the teacher of teachers, claims the most honourable attention. We had been proud to be taught by esteemed professors. Each one of these professors had their individual areas of interest and they specialised in them. Each class of B. J. B. Mohapatra on Bacon's Essays, of Harendra Kumar Mohanty on *King Lear*, of M. Q. Khan, on *Way of the World*, of Byotkesh Tripathy on *Much Ado about Nothing*, of Debendra Kumar Ray on Donne's Poetry, of Nrusingh Kumar Rath on *Hyperion* of John Keats and *The Prelude* of William Wordsworth, of Durga Charan Kuanar on *All for Love*, of Deba Patnayak on British Poetry, of Paresh Chandra Rout on *Tom Jones*, of Rama Chandra Tripathy on E. M. Forster's Essays, of Md. Fakruddin on Linguistics, of Mrs. Susama Tej on English Essays, of Satya Shankar Mishra on O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*, of Jitendra Narayan Patnaik on *Antony and Cleopatra,* and of Sadananda on critical theories, to mention only a few, during our Honours and P.G. days was so intellectually vibrant that we could hardly afford to miss any class. The least could we afford to miss a class was that of Prof. Sarbeswar Das.

Prof. Das was deified by us not only for his scholastic teaching and but also for his ideals. He taught all difficult areas in Special Papers - Linguistics, Indian Writing in English and American Literature - besides *Four Quartets* of T. S. Eliot, and Duchess *of Malfi* of John Webster. He engaged any class in the absence of the teacher concerned and taught the subject. He makes such extensive and apt intertextual references and in such a lucid style that we were simply mesmerised by his lectures. We looked upon him awe and wonder. I had the good luck to work with him at the Khallikote College, Berhampur where he was my Principal. He was very affectionate and he owes our highest tributes.

A young batch of budding talents, fresh from the university, joined the Department during our P.G. days. As they were a couple of years senior to us, they preferred to be addressed as Bhai (Brother). The eldest of them was Bibhu Padhi (Bibhu Bhai), an eminent Indian English poet, Chinmoy Jena, Sujit Mohanty, Trilok Ranjan Das, Rabi Sankar Mishra, and Debananda Mishra, who carved a niche for themselves in English teaching in Odisha. They initiated us into the art of appreciating a work of literature and the technique of analysing a text from examination perspective.

The best contribution to the learning ambience in Ravenshaw was from the peers. I have had good fortune to have very close friends whose companionship I still cherish. Books which was rare and only the prize possession of our teachers could be visible with friends who carefully displayed them to our envy. I had a rather utilitarian

ethics of 'Beg, Borrow or Steal' to have the feel of those rare commodities. The best part of my learning from my friends was from their practical use of classroom discussion. By way of mimicking the teachers or by trying to dazzle with brilliance, some of my friends used important quotations from texts which benefited me a lot. While leaving the hostel for class in the morning, a line runs, "Let us go then you and I" (opening line of "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", T S Eliot) while taking leave for the day, "Fade far away" ("Ode to Nightingale" of John Keats), if by chance I utter "Bye", the reply is "Not, fare well, Fare forward , voyager" (*Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot), and if a time for the next meeting is sought, the First Witch of *Macbeth* is quoted ("When shall we meet again? In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"). If any time one fails to respond, he is hurled with, "The falcon cannot hear the falconer." ("Second Coming", W. B. Yeats). These are all in a humorous mood. For introducing oneself in a lighter vein, "You do not know me" (the opening words of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain), in expressing mischievous intent, "I am not what I am," (Iago in *Othello*, Shakespeare), or conveying pathos, "I am a man more sinned against than sinning" (*King Lear*, Shakespeare) are usual exchanges.

Expressing a reflective mood, proverbial quotations on life and suffering are recalled: "Life's but a walking shadow" (*Macbeth,* Shakespeare); "It is a tale / told by an idiot full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing." (*Macbeth,* Shakespeare); "Happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain." (concluding line of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Thomas Hardy); "Tears of the world is a constant quantity" (*Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett) and "human kind cannot bear very much reality." (*Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot). While ruing the fate of man, the quote used is, "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; / They kill us for their sport." (*King Lear*, Shakespeare) and a note of optimism takes place with "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind" ("Ode to the West Wind", Shelley) or a note of fortitude is with, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated' (Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*).

While appreciating beauty which was spontaneous with us then, Keats was quoted, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" (Opening line of *Endymion*) and extolling feminine glamour, the Alexandrine Queen Cleopatra is the ultimate reference, "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety" (*Antony in Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare) and in praise of courage in love, the dedicated Roman lover Mark Antony's utterance is often quoted, "Let Rome in Tiber melt." The most quoted line is from Hamlet: "To be, or not to be: that is the question".

My friends Basanta Kumar Mishra, Jaya Gobinda Nayak, Pradyot Kumar Mishra, Khirod Mallik and Rath Nayak (He has left for his heavenly abode. Om Shantih!) were past masters in this art. Particularly, Basanta has a great repertoire of quotations at the tip of his tongue. All of us were residing in the New Hostel during our P.G. days. The companionship of such erudite friends can never be glossed over.

After nearly four decades, our batch mates (1975 Batch), with a tinge of nostalgia, "Footfalls echo in the memory" (*Four Quartets*, T. S. Eliot), with a mood of "Only connect" (*Howards End*, E. M. Forster) again met thrice in the Department and twice at Bhubaneswar to reminisce our halcyon days. We look forward hopefully to meeting again and again to enjoy our mutual companionship.

I dare not say, it is now "the worst of times". Even though the faculty position in the Department is disheartening with only one Professor and four Associate Professors, while the major bulk of the classroom teaching is managed by the Guest Faculties, majority of the students are listless about attending classes, and while their time away in gossiping online or offline, "All is not Lost". Peer learning is still the best. Students of the Department are still getting lucrative jobs including I.A.S. besides excelling in the field of art, literature and cine acting. Wonderfully, present academic scenario is better than ours with regard to research activities. The members of Faculty are avidly promoting Research, guiding scholars to their Ph.D. and M.Phil. Degrees, writing research papers and publishing them, and are best in career counselling.

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Ravenshaw Calling

Dr. Kshirod Chandra Acharya
M.A.: 1975

The vivid red building complex of Ravenshaw College beckons to me across the growing gulf of years even as I drift into a mood of nostalgia. It would not let me be at ease until I have gone through the complete range of its form and features - the wide corridors, spacious lawns intersected with paved pathways, the open-air pandal, large lecture theatres, panoramic sweep of its landscape and, of course, the famed Kanika library. I experience the entire gamut of feelings that it once aroused - the joy of learning, stirrings of intellectual curiosity, friendships won and lost, and the joy and heartbreak of youthful love.

Ravenshaw was the cradle of my education and the nursery of my dreams and aspirations. It was the pivot of our cultural awakening and the catalyst for our intellectual growth. It helped us forge lifelong personal bonds.

Ravenshaw was Odisha in miniature. Like a magnet, it drew largely talented students from all over the state. They came from varied socio-educational backgrounds. Consequently, you heard a strange babble of tongues and witnessed a wide variety of style and fashion on campus. There was a sprinkling of convent-educated students who strutted about like they owned the place. They treated us rural lowlanders with lofty disdain.

If Ravenshaw College of the late 60's was the crown of higher education in the state, the department of English was certainly a jewel in the crown. Many members of the department have carved out a name for themselves as original thinkers, writers, administrators and educationists. And the state is justly proud of them.

Our department was a hive of bees humming with activity. Classes usually started before noon on each working day. They were long but worthwhile. Seminars were held at regular intervals and they punctuated the monotonous pattern of the schedule of lectures. And with their scope for a lively exchange of ideas and opinions on a topic of interest, these seminars brought in a whiff of fresh air.

There was a bevy of young women in our class, whom we admired from a respectable distance but never really ventured to interact with. For gender segregation was the order of the day. Besides, we were too shy to make friendly overtures to them. Like attractive butterflies, they flitted about in their well-designed dresses, leaving a trail of colour and fragrance behind. Some of our female classmates were stunningly beautiful and one of them was decidedly the college heart-throb.

Some scenes are etched on my mind and the passing of years has not yet dimmed their effect. There was a young woman in our class with an expression of brooding melancholy. It seemed she was the prisoner of her own mind. She had probably experienced some profound personal sorrow she had yet to overcome but would not confide it in anyone. The mystery will probably remain forever unsolved. She lived in a lonely world of her own unaffected by the bustle of life around her. The sight of the tragedy queen tore at our heart strings and it still does.

Some of our classmates including a few celebrity kids belonged to the class of the intellectual elite. Or so they believed. They made no secret of their scorn for those of us who could not speak English with a cultivated accent and were country bumpkins to boot. Some classmates nursed the ambition to be poets and journalists. Their choice was a less-travelled career path. Our teachers recognised the former's poetic potential early on and encouraged them in every way, brooding over their fortunes like guardian angels. Some led an easy going life and a few chose the rigour of scholarly pursuits. Some took the well-trodden path to civil service or lectureship. It was God's plenty, so far as career options were concerned.

No account of my experiences at Ravenshaw would be complete without a reference to our star-studded department.

Dr. B. K. Tripathy was in a class of his own. Stylish and smartly dressed, he spoke English with a flawless accent. He came to the classroom with a cigarette stuck between his lips, which he was careful to throw away a little way before he reached the entrance. He carried his learning lightly and was quite friendly with us. When an inquisitive classmate raised a question in the class, he told him to wait until the period ended. Then he would take us aside and discuss the point with us until the last of our lurking doubts took wing and disappeared. His easy charm and winsome smile are unforgettable. He always managed to stay cool, even under pressure. That was another feather in his cap.

Sri D. K. Roy came to teach us, carrying an armful of books. His lecture was interspersed with quotations from these books, which he read out at strategic points to corroborate and bolster his viewpoints. Obviously much hard work and intellectual effort had gone into the making of his lecture. However, the radiant smile that played on his face throughout the period (and afterwards) said it all: Love your work if you want to excel in it.

Sri H. N. Mohanty took a pregnant pause after a subset of a couple of crisp sentences. His pauses were so long that you suspected he had lost the thread of his narrative and that he would be unable to resume his lecture from where he had left off. But he finally bounced back just in time to prove us wrong. His mode of delivery, interspersed with recurrent pauses, anticipated Vajpayeeji in his mature years. But we gradually realised that the famous pauses of Mohanty Sir were cunningly devised to give us a chance to gather (and treasure!) the pearls he had scattered before us in such casual profusion.

Soaring above them all was our revered and beloved professor Late Sarbeswar Das. He combined in his persona scholarship and humility in equal measure. He straddled various branches / kinds of English language and literature like a gentle colossus. He taught us Eliot with the same effortless ease as Indo-Anglian literature and linguistics. He was a versatile scholar.

We used to join him when he was out for an evening stroll around or outside of campus. He would buy roasted groundnuts from street hawkers and share them with us. Our conversation usually ranged from college affairs to state politics, from literature to the ancient history of our land. No wonder these rambles had much educative value for us. You were sure of his insightful reply to whatever query you put to him. Das Sir was always ready for a discussion with us ignorant pupils on any tricky academic / literary / personal issues anytime anywhere.

We often trooped into his quarters on Sundays to have a discussion on knotty textual issues that had eluded our understanding. Both Das Sir and madam (who later became an award-winning writer) received us cordially and treated us ever-hungry hostellers to home-made delicacies. Then followed a series of discussions at great length. He combined the best of gurukul traditions with an encyclopaedic range of knowledge about different subjects. He gave us a wholesome diet that was both physically satisfying and intellectually stimulating.

Never did criticise anyone in our hearing. He even discovered endearing qualities in a man of bad repute.

Das sir had an excellent command of Sanskrit and Odia apart from his domain expertise. He had several works of Odia literary criticism to his credit and these were widely acclaimed. But we had no inkling of the fact despite our long association with him. We only came to know about it long after he was no more. Always modest in manner and simple in the way of his life, he shied away from publicity of any kind. With his compassionate heart, charitable disposition and the necessities of his life pared down to the minimum, he was a saintly figure – the only living saint we had ever come across in our life.

Those glorious days are gone forever. But their colour and fragrance still linger on. The inexorable passage of time has made the least difference to our memories of the good old days. And so will it be till we draw our last breath.

Ravenshaw of those days was anchored in the values of inclusiveness and excellence. It accepted in its all-embracing fold bright students from each and every class and cultural group in the state. And while maintaining a consistently high standard of teaching and research, it provided unlimited scope for learning to the ambitious and hard-working students. It helped them realise their potential, both academic and extra-curricular.

In its present avatar, Ravenshaw is forging ahead in its tireless pursuit of excellence. Its track record in encouraging students to be all-rounders has been impressive. And it is all set to script yet another glorious chapter in its history by adapting itself to the needs and demands of changing times. The grand old institution of higher education, hopefully, will be a cherished centre of excellence in our country.

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The Carol and the Plaintive Note

Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty
B.A.: 1972-74, M.A.: 1974-76
Teacher: 2009-2015

I owe much to the Department of English of Ravenshaw College and Ravenshaw University. I studied in the college for six years and taught in the University for seven. During these thirteen years I have learnt so much from my teachers and students. But everything during these years in Ravenshaw is not sunshine and light; her sky is also often eclipsed by night and darkness. However, the dim sun is there on the distant horizon.

I joined Ravenshaw College in 1971 as a student of First Year Arts class. Ravenshaw then generated hope and promised prospect; students basked in her glory. But for me the year is significant because in the playground of the College I met a boy named Hadibandhu who was then studying in Pre-Professional class. Our friendship blossomed and during the half century of our relationship there has never been a single occasion or moment when I have been hurt either by his action or his word. I am sure others acquainted with him shall have the same opinion about him. When people pass such persons on the road, they miss them, even ignore them, because there is nothing in their appearance and speech that is imposing. They live incognito. But they are the quintessence of a human being; they breathe the good of humanity. They are the small singing birds in the wilderness of the world. Their lives are worthy to be read by people. I have the sense of fulfilment that I have such a friend. There are many great men, but rare are the good.

My Honours and Post-Graduate classes in English spanned from 1972 to 1976. Hadibandhu too studied English. Satya was staying in the hostel. He came to my home and subsequently we stayed together there. My parents got another son; my brother and sisters got another brother; I got a friend dearer than a brother. Our family swelled in joy. I and Satya leaped the steps of the Department; everyday was a new day, a new beginning. Life seemed so colourful! Ashok, Shanta, Gopa, Kishore, Kamala, Sweta, Banashree, Manjula, Someeta, Jayshree, Debasish, Biseswar, Pradipta, Rabi, Rashmi, Sneha, Manorama, Sunanda, Suprava, Tapan, Biru, Alok, Benu, Krishna, Trupti, Mrutyunjay, Bijay, Joachim, Bhagaban, Bhagirathi, Terence, Bishnu, Trinath. With such

friends life glided with kaleidoscopic joy. It gave us the feeling that dreams do take place even in waking condition. So evanescent, yet so indelible! When I reminisce, I feel as if it was yesterday.

Our teachers were known for their passion for teaching and the pursuit of knowledge. Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra, Prof. Debendra Kumar Ray, Prof. Md. Qamruddin Khan, Sri Nrushingha Charan Rath, Sri Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra, Dr. Sadananda Mishra, Sri Satya Shankar Mishra, Dr. Susama Tej, Prof. Jitendra Narayan Patnaik, Sri Paresh Chandra Rout, Sri Raghunath Panda, Sri Sujit Kumar Mohanty, Sri Frederick Wright, Sri Devanand Mishra, Dr. Priyadarshi Dash, Prof. Rabi Shankar Mishra, Dr. Bibhu Prasad Padhi and Sri Chinmoy Jena. Bibhu Sir and Chinmoy Sir became Bibhu Bhai and Chinu Bhai. Such are our teachers who adorned the Department.

Professor Sarbeswar Dash was the Head of our Department. Professors were then few and far between. We had a feeling that a Professor is a superior being, as if descended from a different planet. But Sarbeswar Sir made us feel that he was a member of our family. Such was his demeanour that he would often call us for a walk and offer groundnuts to us and give a wholesome meal at his home. He fasted, took penance for us whenever he noticed any lapse in our study or conduct. His knowledge in all subjects was awesome. He could teach any subject with felicity without notice. We grew up in such an atmosphere. And in that ambience, I found the religion: Learning.

I joined Ravenshaw University as a teacher in December 2009. I looked for Nata who served the Department so well when we were students. But he was not there. Manu was there in his place, though for a brief period, who was substituted by Krushna, Ashok, Allahada, Ananta and Titu in succession. All of them have rendered good service to the Department.

That was the period of transition - from College to University. Government College teachers continued in the Department. We had a wonderful time with Rajani Bhai, Sumitra Madam and Nandita Madam. Prof. Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik headed the Department and did commendable work for the fledgling Department. Susmita Madam, Bikash Babu, Madhusmita Madam, Khagendra Babu, Sambit Babu, Guru Babu, Urmee Madam and Madhumita Madam taught in the Department. I remember one incident when Susmita Madam reached the Department and found that she had left at her residence in Bhubaneswar some notes she had prepared for the class and then she drove all the way to Bhubaneswar to get those notes before she took the class. I was

very much delighted to feel that I was the colleague of such a dedicated teacher. Despite some differences of opinion among us on certain issues, the period witnessed gusto and vigour and we feel that nostalgia is a healthy feeling.

Students during that period gave the happiest moments. I came from a humble, modest set up – the Non-Government Aided Colleges of Odisha. One of my seniors reminded me that this is the Department of English of Ravenshaw University. I accepted it with all seriousness, though later I experienced that there are some teachers in the non-Government Aided College of Odisha who are more dedicated and knowledgeable than many University teachers. I went to the class and saw the beaming faces of students at the place where we used to sit and I realised that I had stood at the place which my venerable teachers had glorified. I had trepidation – the trepidation that is healthy, that makes one steadfast and aware of one's responsibility. I resolved, resolved to be worthy of my teachers and I have worked hard, very hard towards that goal. Interaction with Honours and Post-Graduate students, in and outside the class, has validated my existence as a teacher. The prizes that they have given me are the treasures of my life. My Ph.D. students – Pragyan, Ashish, Banamali, Subash, Binayak, Aditi, Krishna and Anshuman - have given me the contentment of life. Some of them greet me both on the Teachers' Day and on the Fathers' Day. What could be more comforting than this?

I retired from university service in September 2015. In the send-off ceremony my students and colleagues made me breathless with love for my healthiest breathing in future. In the meeting I had said that I would feel most obliged if I would be asked to teach after my retirement on the condition that I would not receive any remuneration for that. I have received so much from this Department that I can never pay back the debt; but if I can give a little, I will get a great. I waited for five years, but I was never called. Then after September 2020 I took other assignments. Maybe I was not called because I had been registering my protest against the corruption and illegal activities of the prevailing dispensations.

One significant event that took place during my teaching in Ravenshaw was the formation of the Alumni Association of the Department of English. Sri Pradosh Chandra Mohanty, as the President of the Association, rendered yeoman's service to the Department. It is heard that he was later disillusioned with the working of some members of the Association. I was pained because disillusionment is the precursor of defeat and the disillusionment of the just and the energetic is victual of the evil.

While ruminating over the corruptions and illegalities committed in Ravenshaw during my student days, I realise that they were almost non-existent, or if there were

any, they only touched the surface of the institution; but those during the last decade have become ubiquitous and have rocked its structure. Yet there are people, who, far from addressing the present problem, sing the glory of Ravenshaw. I am not one among those who can accept that the heaps of ruin are the mounds of gold. Ravenshaw has been torn asunder during the last ten years. In search of profit and for doing nepotism some authorities have formed a cabal with some dishonest employees in which the pettifoggers and demagogues have joined. They have erected a solid structure. They stretch their tentacles even to clutch the highest echelons of government and social institutions. They persecute those upright employees and the good students who voice protest against their corrupt and illegal practices. They possess the apparatus of propaganda, misinformation and enticement to hoodwink the people and mislead the youth. The upright and the good are defamed and painted in black as troublemakers and anarchists. When news and representations against their misdeeds come out, they fiercely shout that by such acts the image of Ravenshaw is tarnished. It is not the news and representations, but their heinous acts which take the institution to ignominy. The perpetrators of these unethical acts and their supporters label such writings like mine as seditious libel and argue through their distorted logic that such writings are inappropriate to the time and occasion and that these writings trample upon the sacrosanct. No writing can claim to be too sacred to shirk from fighting against wrongs and evils; no institution is too sacrosanct to declare that it is impervious to vice and that it has immunity from corruption. On the other hand, how well the writings and the institutions address these problems are their test. The intriguers of such clique not only use the instrument of chicanery and deceit, but also try to nullify the activities against them by silencing the supporters and agents of the protesters. One of the very Senior Advocates whom I had engaged in a case against an illegal action of the authorities of Ravenshaw once hurled at me, shouting, "Why are you so persistent, are you not tired?" to which I replied, "No, I am not tired, I will persist". He then shrieked, "Do you think your statue will be installed at Ravenshaw?" To this I muttered, "Not the statue, but surely some of them are preparing my coffin".

Corruptions and illegalities have ravished Ravenshaw during the last ten years. Of them faculty recruitment has been the most infamous one. Appointment is made for post in the Department and salary is paid to the incumbent from public fund when no such post exists. Appointments are made without advertisement in violation of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India and posts are filled up without interview. U.G.C. rules are flouted at will and qualifications required to apply as cited in the Advertisement

are changed after the last date of submission of application is over. Appointments are given to candidates in the subjects which they have never studied - either in Honours or in Post-Graduation or in Ph.D. Protests against all these have been registered at different fora. A number of cases have been filed in the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa. Though some check has been given, yet the culprits move and act defiantly without a blink. While the lovers of Ravenshaw who protest against the corruptions and illegalities suffer sleepless nights in distress, the malefactors enjoy sleepless nights in revelry.

The Department and the Institution writhe in pain and agony. Some pay lip sympathy to ideals. But why are the lovers of Ravenshaw mute? Why have their voices been chocked? Why are the dispensers of justice silent? Are they apathetic or have they become the patrons of injustice and corruption? Should the alumni meet only to sing and celebrate and to dine and dance? Will they not assemble to purge and purify and become agents to reform and punish? We can never afford laxity when fundamental questions of human value - ethics and morality - are at stake. Even political and constitutional issues are vitally intertwined with spiritual and philosophical traditions. It has been felt by nations that it is the duty of religion to fight against debauchery and corruption. Many Americans have acknowledged that to the pulpit they owe the moral force which won their independence. C. F. Andrews garnered support against British rule in India from the Church of England. Then it was independence from some foreigners; now independence from some of our own people. History bears testimony to great literary talents abdicating their vocation of disinterested literature to respond to social issues, to the call of the time. In the 17th Century Milton in England offered the gusto of the best twenty years of his life to respond to that call; in the 18th Freneau and Trumbull did it in America; in the 20th Orwell moved from fiction to journalism for the urgency of using words against the rising tide of totalitarianism during the Spanish Civil War. Our Centenary celebration is the appropriate time and occasion for revaluation, for stocktaking of the Department and of the Institution.

The lacklustre Centenary Celebration reflects the decadence. The decadence is seen, heard and felt in the eye, the ear and the vein. The bang of the proposed year-long celebration has ended in a whimper. Celebration, as celebration only, may not be very significant; but it records the pulse rate of an institution. Even new-born and infant organisations celebrate their existence in a remarkable way. But our one hundred year old Department, with the adamantine marrow in her bone, stands dejected. Eight months have already passed without even a murmur. Will the sound of the 3rd September be

dissolved, unheard thereafter and will the time till the end of December witness another ignominious silence?

While in the recent past Ravenshaw has wept over the misdeeds, let us do some good works so that she smiles now and in future. Good work is not characterized by meekness and mildness, but by justness. In the present context it may be marked by aggression and tumult, because it will cross swords against the evil. And for that it may often appear combative and belligerent, but it is most creative, because its goal is to usher in a healthy order. Yet, isolated pieces of good work shall not bear fruit. The drop of nectar shall be dissolved in the ocean of poison; the oasis shall be engulfed by the desert.

Some have done hard work to ameliorate the condition of Ravenshaw University. Dr.Manoranjan Behura has pioneered the crusade against corruption; Sri Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak has been conspicuous with his undaunted zeal; Dr. Debapriya Dash (Tiki) has substantially contributed to this movement. Some incumbent employees of the University have worked, though cautiously, in fear of persecution; and even some who were never either student or teacher of Ravenshaw have collaborated. Some students have done great work. Theirs is the healing touch, theirs the balmy breath. But what is required is organised action.

The Department is not Tennyson's Brook that tells, "For men may come and men may go / But I go on forever." She is the Mother who tells, "I will go with my children in dignity and grace." Dignity and grace are the progeny of virtue. And virtue flourishes with reward of the good and punishment of the evil.

The alarming degeneration of Ravenshaw in the recent past has made some of her admirers sad and despondent. They are disheartened and shocked with apprehension of hearing a dirge. This is the time neither to mourn nor to lose heart, but to be steadfast and strong. It is only a plaintive note and we must resolve to bring back the carol of Ravenshaw of the yesteryears.

The dim sun is there on the distant horizon.

[Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, as a Fulbright Fellow, did research at Johns Hopkins University, USA. His books are published by Macmillan, Bloomsbury and others. Dr. Mohanty has many research articles to his credit. He received medals in National Athletics and represented Sambalpur University in Cricket.]

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"In Each night I lie down in a graveyard of memories"... Jerry Spinelli.

My Ravenshaw... always a dream... never an illusion...

Dr. Satyabrata Das
B.A.: 1972-74, M.A.: 1974-76

- I -

It was early 70s. That was the time when we did eleven years in school. Next one year it was called Pre University though exams were conducted by the University. Next year, the thirteenth class, was called first year degree, and both these years were treated as intermediate.

After being graduated from school at Cuttack town in 1970 I wished to explore new worlds and got into B. J. B. College, Bhubaneswar. The cool breeze blowing all the year round, the clean empty roads, no traffic jam even at peak hours, no mosquito nor garbage nor water logging in the height of rainy season instantly impressed me about Bhubaneswar as I came from one of the oldest urban centres of the world with clogged roads, swarms of mosquitoes hitting your face from all directions after Sundown, and filth and garbage all over. Hence Bhubaneswar appeared to me more exciting at first sight than probably Vasco, the Portuguese sailor, felt reaching Calicut on the Malabar Coast in South India.

But the illusion soon faded away and I missed my Cuttack and its warmth. Though I had my Bua, my maternal uncle, mausi and my cousins I felt a deep vacuum within me all the while. Somehow I completed my Intermediate in B. J. B. College and looked forward to returning to my home town after two years of voluntary exile. Nevertheless, my stay at Bhubaneswar had a brilliant silver line. The emotional bond I developed with my friends has lasted a life time. In hindsight, I can now see my formative emotional back up got consolidated during my two year sojourn at Bhubaneswar.

- II -

1972 summer. One of the hottest as all elders said. Our exams were over by the end of March though, the result was inordinately delayed for some reason I fail to recall now. I just remember, my summer holiday of 1972 was the longest in my career. I took admission in Ravenshaw in the Arts stream opting for English Honours. Our

classes started after Puja vacation. Everything was grand about Ravenshaw: **itssprawling campus** with structures of medieval grandeur, the huge **tennis court** on the front, the **Administrative Block**, the Chamber of the Principal as impressive as a Chief Minister's, the historic **East Hostel** and the **West Hostel** standing impressively like two Towers flanking a Castle. The huge **rectangle** inside carpeted with green grass and flowers of myriad colours gave all new comers an exotic feeling. The **Sun Dial** at the centre of the giant rectangle fascinated all of us. We never missed a chance to push through the curious crowd of new entrants (that gathered morning till evening without fail) to catch a glimpse of the **Sun Dial**. The **Kanika Library**, the **P.L.T.**, the **C.L.T.** and the **two halls** adjoining the East and the West Hostel were the venues of most of the Under graduate classes and co- curricular activities. Those walls and roofs have been the mute witnesses of the hard work and sacrifice of generations of teachers who successfully ground thousands of rough diamonds to bring them into their neat polished forms to enable them to make their way into the main stream of life: from academia to administration to judiciary, politics, diplomacy and the giant Corporate Houses of the modern world. Indeed Ravenshaw has been a prolific incubation center for over a century and half on end. Its alumni are now spread over the entire globe in impressive positions and contribute phenomenally in the field of education, science, technology and, of course, politics. Now you can find its alumni at any corner of the world living with respect. This memoir will remain incomplete if I skip a few relevant links.

- III -

I felt fortunate to get a chance to stay in East Hostel as it was a coincidence that my father stayed there in 1930s. Incidentally he was a classmate of late Biju Pattnayak, Biren Mitra (two former Chief Ministers) and Pranabandhu Kar (a noted writer and educationist). But the way I got into East Hostel is interesting. I have already mentioned that I came from B. J. B. College. It was only one single double storey building (then called the Arts Block, presently accommodates the Higher Secondary classes only) that we were confined to.

But Ravenshaw was huge and so spread out that it took me quite some time to acquaint myself with its topography. A friend of mine (who later retired as the Principal of a big autonomous college) was my first guide as he studied there his two years of intermediate science. He knew this vast landscape like the back of his hand. I was heavily impressed by his knowledge and confidence as I was unsure and shaky initially like a stranger in a foreign soil. But my friend had a queer habit of maintaining suspense

about useful information. Hence I quite often missed notifications that came out from time to time. It so happened, I missed the last date to apply for a hostel accommodation. A senior student suggested me to occupy a seat first in a hostel and appeal to the Principal to allot the seat officially. But it was not that easy. We had a noted Odia Professor Dr. Srinivas Mishra as our Warden. He came a couple of times to my room and pressurized me to vacate. But I didn't. Then the matter went to our Principal. He was **Dr. Mahendra Kumar Rout,** widely known for his academic excellence with international recognition. Everybody, including very senior Professors, respected him greatly. So I was a bit disturbed to know that my case had been escalated. And the rumour was rife that any time there could be a crack down and eviction. One of those tense evenings when I was in my hostel room I heard some noise on the corridor and the footsteps of a sea of soldiers like. A friend of mine came gasping into my room and announced that our Principal had come to visit and to evict unauthorized inmates like me. The Principal had arrived with a host of Professors, Hostel Warden and a crowd of curious onlookers from among our inmates. I was counting every second with my heart pounding within my ribs. Lips parched, I felt dryness at my throat. An unknown fear gripped me. I heard the heavy footsteps on the long corridor coming closer and closer to my room… And then someone opened my door with a horrible creak. I was face to face with my Principal in the dimly lit hostel room. My Warden pointed his finger at me with a few unkind words as our Principal looked menacingly at me and asked me point blank, "Why do not you vacate in spite of several warnings by your Warden?" Obviously I had no valid answer. I do notknow, a strange inner voice prompted me from within. All my nervousness vanished for a moment. And I replied politely with all firmness and confidence, "Sir, my father has retired and we have vacated our rented accommodation. If I quit the hostel I have to discontinue my studies as I have no other alternative". My Principal Professor Rout flew into rage, admonished me and soon left my room with a stern warning to me to vacate by the next day. Strangely, he left the Hostel premises after inspecting my room while he was scheduled to visit many more rooms that had the same issue.

And to my surprise and great relief, the next morning by 11.30 am the office of the Principal brought out a notification validating my occupancy in the Hostel along with a few other delinquents like me. That is an instance of the thoughtfulness, magnanimity and forgiveness of a teacher that Prof. Rout was. Since that occasion he always looked upon me with trust and affection till I completed my Post Graduation. On another occasion, my elder brother, who was doing his Masters in English, ran short of required percentage (as he had taken up a job) and was debarred from filling in the

Forms for his M.A. exams. I approached my Principal Dr. Rout who promptly solved the problem by instructing one of the Professors to make a separate attendance register and take his attendance to enable him to appear his Exams. The alacrity Prof. Rout shows at moments of crisis and the decision he takes like lightning is indeed exemplary. Ever in his *Snow White* dress we see him roving round the vast campus of Ravenshaw with untiring zeal. While in much smaller under graduate Colleges the Principals fail to take classes for their busy administrative engagements, Professor Rout took classes religiously from Pre University to M.Sc. apart from guiding scholars for Ph.D. and D.Sc. programs. It may sound like fiction now, but true. We are fast losing such role models, hence the degradation that we see at every step. This was **Professor Mahendra Kumar Rout,** a legendary Principal, who was a wonderful fusion of a father and a teacher.

- IV -

Moving from B.A. Honours to M.A. English class appeared just a ritual as we continued to assemble on the same floor of the Building (with the same set of Professors and mostly the same old friends), called the Commerce Block. It was a three storey Building. The ground floor was the Commerce Department; the first floor was Economics and the second English. I cannot say why, but it was almost with every student of English there was a feeling of superiority somewhere deep within. However modest one may appear outwardly, each one had some airs about himself or herself. Maybe, we can trace this syndrome back to our long British Colonial rule that we are yet to get over completely.

The number of students got doubled in M.A. We got excited to get many many new friends from S. B. Womens' and from many other affiliated Colleges of our state. And the friendship we struck with them has lasted a life time. Many of them remained in academics, some got into State Civil Service, some got promoted later to all India Civil Services and some got married to all India civil servants. Though meeting now has become few and far between we all carry fond memories in our hearts. Once I was invited to Ravindra Bharati University in Kolkata to deliver the key note address in a National Seminar on American literature in 1999. An old friend of mine who taught in a College in a distant location came (after seeing my name on the flyer) all the way to see me despite her health issues. I can never forget the glow and warmth in her eyes. No amount of money or power or privilege can possibly compensate that. And with some friends, the bond remains as strong and as solid as rock though nearly half a century has passed in between.

Our Post Graduate Department of English was headed by Professor **Sarbeswar Dash**, a teacher unparalleled. Exceptionally brilliant, a topper in Matriculation in Bihar Odisha Board that Patna was conducting. A prolific speaker, a giant with his command over Odia, Bengali, Sanskrit, British, Continental and American literature. He could speak French like a native. It was a great fortune we could get him as our teacher and guide. A Gandhian in spirit he knew no fear. Towards the fag end of his career he was sent as Principal to the troublesome Khallikote College, Berhampur. That was a cesspool of crime, violence and rampant malpractice in exams. While several tough Principals had earlier tried the *bow of Ulysses* to quell the situation they couldn't; Professor Dash faced the situation squarely with no fear nor favour and put an end to the long history of malpractice and violence that the College was infamous for.

Every inch a teacher, dedication and commitment was the hall mark of Professor Dash. That was a difficult, rather struggling phase when in retrospect we could clearly feel the handicap and helplessness of a Head of the Department that Professor Dash was. With a skeletal work force (many of whom were casual and half – hearted in their attitude and took full advantage of the simplicity and innocuous nature of Prof. Dash) Professor Dash had to literally run from one class room to another from 9 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon. Often he would move straight from a P.G. class room to an intermediate with the same tempo till he got shocked to realize that his lecture went way above the heads of his students. Then he would apologise profusely and moderate himself. We wish, we could once again get a chance to listen to his profound and provocative lectures now. Then we definitely lacked the maturity and understanding to follow his erudite and highly philosophical lectures with frequent cross references to Odia, Bengali and Sanskrit literature and to Greek myths and literature.

I remember, it was a seminar organized by the Post Graduate Department of English, Utkal University,VaniVihar sometime in late 90s. The topic was related to modern critical theory. Prof. Dash was the Guest of Honour. We all gathered in their oval conference Hall. I sat exactly opposite my Professor at right angle. Before the proceeding commenced I noticed Prof. Dash was visibly uncomfortable and soon he broke into sobbing. Then he called out to me, "Satya, could you please ask all participants here how many of them have read **Aristotle's *Poetics***". I felt embarrassed and helpless. In a moment of confusion I looked around and saw mostly young lecturers from different affiliated colleges, elegantly dressed and smartly carrying their Portfolio files sitting visibly demoralized at the query of Prof. Dash. What anguished him was the relative superficiality of the new generation of teachers who, by and large, are averse to go a little deep, and mostly hibernate in complacency. And in that session, in his casual

remark, what Professor Dash spoke was rather more impressive than what the Key note speaker did.

Every bit *genuine; no ostentation, no affectation, no jargon hungry, no name dropping, no histrionics* – such was Professor Sarbeswar Dash, a class by himself, who represents a generation that is a myth for us now.

- V -

It was late 1973 when we were crying for a bit of attention in the drought like situation that the staff crunch created since early 1972 (with most of our classes going cancelled or unattended and we were returning home hungry and disappointed) one came like an angel bringing along a shower of merciful rain. It was **Professor D. K. Roy** who revived our hope and confidence and saw us through the B.A. Honours final Exams. He gave us the real taste of *class room teaching* with the accompanying seriousness and professionalism. We realized for the first time that a class room is not meant for *all and sundry*. We learnt from him a missionary zeal, seriousness, a thoughtfulness, organization, timing, precision and, above all, clarity. Till long after our revered Professor retired I was in close touch with him. His modesty, softness and his warmth were endearing. I wish we could have more and more teachers like **Prof. D. K. Roy**…

-VI -

Yet another Angel, a *Guardian Angel* indeed, we were so fortunate to get (though he came quite late when we were about to sit for our M.A. exams) was **Professor Soubhagya Kumar Mishra,** a celebrated poet, writer and an inspiring teacher. I was all the more excited because he taught me intermediate in B. J. B. College and we were mad for him. I remember clearly, we all were diffident about one text in M.A. that our Head, Professor Dash, had covered. As I have already mentioned, he was a giant, his range of knowledge amazing, and once he got charged he would simply hop and jump from literature to literature; from Sanskrit to Bengali to Odia to English to ancient Roman and Greek at such terrific speed we felt overwhelmed. Most of them just went right over our heads. He used to dance in a flying mode from one literature to another, drawing comparisons from such remote and far-fetched sources that we felt completely bowled over. But when exams came we just couldn't organize ourselves to put up our ideas into a 35 – 40 minute answer frame. We realized it was nearly impossible to do.

And just on time, **Professor Soubhagya Kumar Mishra** joined Ravenshaw. We all the final year M.A. students got together and requested Prof. Mishra to help us

on that text. It was a horrifying proposition as he happened to be a direct student and an ardent admirer of Professor Dash. Besides, how can one junior Colleague dare to touch a text that the Professor and Head has officially covered? But somehow he realized our desperation and agreed to help us unofficially on a Sunday. That he did. He knew our range and limitation and gave us just a bit that we could grasp. And with that one and half hour session we went to M.A. exams confident and assured. That was his magic touch which very few teachers possess.

On another occasion, in 1970 in B. J. B. College (when Prof. Mishra was teaching poetry to us in our Pre University class), a girl got up and asked Prof. Mishra the difference between Italian Sonnet and Shakespearean Sonnet. He obviously didn't expect this question from a fresher. He could have easily managed *off- hand* telling the broad differences. But he paused a bit, and then told her to explain in the next class. And he did that religiously. That struck me deeply. And this honesty and seriousness I remembered all my life as a teacher. That is the high ethical value we often forget in life to score temporary meaningless points. But it matters a lot for a teacher who is a living model for his/her students. Such teachers are rare to find these days of *short-cuts, Google and internet.*

A note of confession: All my life I taught in under-graduate colleges. Though I enjoyed teaching all the time, I had a wish to teach in Ravenshaw. It so happened I was asked to take post graduate classes in Ravenshaw the day after I retired as Principal of an under graduate college. And thanks to the then HOD who offered me Criticism, W. B. Yeats and Modern Poetry besides other texts. I must confess, the two semesters I did was enough to compensate my life time deprivation. The spark and the glow that I saw in the eyes of my students after every class was simply divine, incredible. I owe to them so much for helping me fulfil my lifetime longings. I wish I had continued till infinity, but for my health issues I couldn't.

I am afraid, I am going a bit longer than the approved limit in view of space crunch though I wish I could go on and on recalling every bit of the happiest phase of my life in this sick hurry world... I just cannot help saying over and over again that Ravenshaw has made us what we are all today. And each of our beloved teachers played *surrogate parent to us...*

[Dr. Satyabrata Das is renound academician. He was awarded Fulbright Fellowship to work at Harvard University, USA. Dr. Das has published three books: *George Orwell: the Man Who Saw Tomorrow, Ernest Hemingway: The Turning Point,* and *Reflections on the Great Indian Epic: Mahabharat in Odisha, Bengal and Assam.*]

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The Book of Life

Mr. Hadibandhu Satapathy
B.A.: 1972-74, M.A.: 1974-76
Teacher: 1984-90, 2015-21 (Visiting Faculty)

Some memories are to be treasured. Some others are to be cherished. A few of them are to be forgotten. Many of them can never be replaced. Reminiscing and reliving them always keep one young, fresh, vigorous and full of life. Most of us might not have the time, space, chance, the forum and necessary will to record and share them.

My long association of 18 years with Ravenshaw as an institution in general and with the department of English in particular has been a life-changing experience. From 1970 to 1976 as a student, from 1984 to 1990 as a teacher and from 2015 to 2021 as a Visiting faculty in the department of English must have made me a blue-eyed boy of Destiny. The department of English offered me ample opportunities for a transition and progression from a shy, reserved, non-descript and a boy next door to a Man-patient, matured, tough, weather beaten, always ready to take on challenges in life.

The department of English has given me many things in life. It has given me bread and butter, many close and intimate friends to trust and bank upon, and hundreds of dear students who are my real wealth, my teachers who had been my guiding spirit in life and immense confidence and courage to negotiate the tangled turnings of life.

Ravenshaw College had never been my dream. My father's stern words that he would not be able to afford my admission into any other college than Ravenshaw - at a stone's throw distance from our home at Sikharpur - served as an exigency to make me a Ravenshawvian.

So my journey began as a student in Ravenshaw College, *'The Nourishing Mother'*, *'The Temple of Learning'*, *'Fair to look on'* and *'Stately in Proportions'*. I became an integral part of the imposing Red-brick building – the iconic landmark of the millennium city of Cuttack – the huge playground, the colourful quadrangle with jasmine flowers in full bloom, the boulevard with tall leafy trees flanking the road and bowing to the great people who had walked on the road from Botany Department to Commerce Block. Then commenced my probation to study the 'Book of Life' for so many years.

In Pre-University Science Class Dr. Mahajiteswar Das, impeccably dressed, used to march on the corridor of the Arts Block with military precision to teach us

"And then Gandhi Came". I had a taste of the college teaching and the attendant difficulties associated with it. For some time I became butt-end of ridicule by some well-to-do, smart batchmates who mocked at my full half pants and long half shirts which are being considered a fashion these days.

I was never mentally equipped to study Science. So after Pre-Professional I opted for Humanities with English as my Honours subject. English Honours with History and Political science as pass subjects was considered a royal combination.

During my Pre-Professional days I met a tall lanky youngman making style statements with his iconic sky blue bell bottoms and white round-neck tee-shirt. He was the cynosure of all eyes. The very next day during inter-class cricket tournament I saw him in white flannels, representing First Year Degree class, striding majestically and decimating the much-vaunted batting line up of P.G. Cricket Team, boasting of many Ranji Players, with his fiery pace and accurate swing bowling. After such a scintillating performance he was not selected to represent Ravenshaw Cricket Team is another story.

He came, I saw him and he conquered.

He was Mrutyunjaya and the friendship that sprouted from a *'common passion for sports'* grew and flourished into a lasting relationship. It has survived the test of time for the last fifty years or so and will continue to do so till we breathe our last. It is no wonder my mother had, fondly, conferred the title 'Gurudev' on him for his down-to-earth practical wisdom in guiding me in difficult situations. His penchant for fighting against injustice and his absolute commitment to friendship made him a wonderful companion in sun and rain. Satyabrata was a dear and intimate friend. He was a dreamer, a visionary. He was the most daring and vocal amongst us. He would always come out with the out-of-the box ideas and would startle us with candid, straightforward manners. He could easily win hearts of his friends. Shanta Prakash, a family friend since school days, continued to be very close. He used to be called, 'Mr Cool', 'Mr. Patient', justifying his name. Even in most trying situations of life he would remain calm and impassive. All of my friends epitomize elemental human virtues even now. Other friends used to call us 'Three Musketeers'. We used to derive pleasure in basking in each other's glories. Without expectations we respected our independent way of life.

My induction into English (Hons.) was baptism by fire. Prof. Deba Pattnaik, a legend by then, with his foreign accent asked in a general class of 128 students: "The students who have opted English as their Honours should raise their hands". I raised my hand, so also many of my friends. But he picked me up in the multitude. I stood up

with butterflies in the stomach, virtually quaking from tip to toe. He asked me, "Why have you opted?" "I have a special fascination for English literature, Sir", I replied. "O! special fascination!", pat came his quick-witted response. "Your answer is impressive but I am not impressed." I saluted his tremendous presence of mind.

Prof. Sujit Mohanty taught us *Desire under the Elms*. His class was lively and we watched a real drama being enacted Prof. Nrusingha Charan Rath explained the rudiments of Romantic poetry while teaching us *The Eve of St. Agnes*. Gopa, Debashis, Satya, Shanta, Terence, Alok, Tapan, Biru, Sneha, Trupti and Trinath were classmates to remember.

I did not have pretensions of being a good and brilliant student. During Post Graduate days our team of Satya, Shanta, Mrutyunjaya and I became close knit. Like in life, I used to bring up the rear and take a back seat in discussions and meetings while Mrutyunjaya and Satya chipped in with confidence and occasional flourishes. The scholastic pursuit of Kamala, the leader in Kishore with his trademark expressions, the royal gait of Ashok, The histrionic talent of Bishnu, the chaste English of Bisweswar, the singer in Tapan, the tall presence of Pradipta, will always be remembered. Bijaya, Bhagirathi, Benudhar, Bhagaban and Debasis and Rabi all contributed to the camaraderie in the class. The animated discussion about different aspects of the all time blockbuster SHOLAY amongst Sweta, Someeta, Manjula, Jayashree, Banashree, Sunanda and Rashmi used to warm up the atmosphere in the class.

The teachers in the department Dr. M. Q. Khan, Dr. J. N. Pattnaik, Prof. Paresh Rout, Dr. Sadananda Mishra, Dr. D. K. Ray, Dr. B. J. B. Mohapatra, Dr. Satyasankar Mishra, Dr. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra and Dr. SusamaTej, taught us with passion and dedication. The booming voice of Prof. Paresh Rout, the authority and professionalism of Dr. D. K. Ray while teaching metaphysical poetry, Dr. Jeetendra Narayan Pattnaik's command over history of Criticism, the unique style of Dr. B. J. B. Mohapatra, Dr. Soubhagya K. Mishra's genuine interpretations will be ever missed. The young teachers like Dr. Bibhu Padhi, Dr. Chinmoy Jena, Dr. T. R. Dash and Dr. Frederick Wright were impressive and admired by the students. Due to my proximity to Bibhu Bhai I became a member of his family sharing the joys and sorrows.

Professor Sarbeswar Das, the head of the department was a legend. He was a true teacher with his God-like personality, simplicity and endless humility. His student-friendly mindset always compelled our wonder. He would walk into any class in a teacher's absence and hypnotize us with his repertoire of knowledge and scholarship on the subject. We used to sit awestruck and in a trance as he would be displaying his wonderful range of ideas while teaching *Four Quartets*.

Many times he would visit my (not a prominent student) home at Sikharpur in my absence and next day he would spring a surprise by exclaiming that he was unable to distinguish between my father and my uncle.

Once in a Seminar he came to my rescue when I was about to be snubbed by a senior student for my innocuous question on *Waiting for Godot.* He defended me by explaining that the question was not weird but valid and relevant.

His handwriting to suggest some improvements in my paper on *The Scarlet Letter* will be treasured by me with care.

All of us looked at our teachers, then we looked into them and finally we looked up to them.

II

I had a real, intense encounter with the Book of Life when, consequent upon my transfer from B. J. B. College, I joined Ravenshaw College as a faculty in 1984. It was almost home-coming for me. Never in the wildest of my dreams I had imagined that I would share the staff common room and brush shoulders with such elite in Ravenshaw. Many of them were my teachers and my mentors. They were all giants and I was a pygmy. Dr. M. Q. Khan, Dr. M. J. Das, Dr. D. K. Ray and Prof. Paresh Rout were all my teachers with Dr. Sadhan Parida, Dr. R. P. Panigrahi, Dr. P. K. Pattnaik, Dr. Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak who were senior teachers in the department. I was only odd one out amongst the virtual who's who of English teaching in Odisha. I was a green horn trying to have a foothold in English teaching. We were a big family of 21 members with Dr. M. Q. Khan as the head. But all of them were so good that they made me feel comfortable. Dr. R. N. Mishra, Dr. Bhagaban Jaisingh, Dinesh Sir, Bibhu Bhai, Chinu Bhai, Tapan Bhai, Rajani Bhai, Debapriya and Indira Madam were always ready to guide me.

Just before summer break, as was the usual practice, texts and domains were assigned to the members of the department so that they would come prepared when the college would reopen after vacation.

I was new and unknown to many. Most of the teachers staked their claim for their favourable texts, subjects and domains. As always I had to wait for my turn and bring up the rear. The only novel that was left out towards the end of the meeting was *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. It had no taker, so I was assigned the text. Initially I was befuddled by the bizarre but healthy enthusiasm of the senior teachers to compete and fall over each other to get their favourite text. I still remember Bibhu Bhai's veiled warning and a note of caution for taking *The Sound and the Fury* with gratitude as that made me strong-willed to meet the challenge. After initial hiccups, teaching *The Sound and the Fury* became a sheer pleasure for me for the next five years.

Chinu Bhai and I were in charge of the herculean and mindboggling task of preparing the time-table of the department. We used to work into late-nights to allot the desired time zones to the respective members. The strategy was that one of us would remain absent on the day the time-table would be placed in the department to effectively counter the possible fallout. There was a great unity amongst teachers when it came to face the challenges.

One of the most memorable moments was the visit of the Nobel Laureate William Golding to the department. We used to savour the hospitality of Dr. M. Q. Khan at his residence with biriyani and curd with pieces of cucumber in it whenever there was a get-together in the department.

Sri Dinesh Prasad Pattnayak, Dr. Sanat Das Pattnaik and Tapan Kanti Pattnaik effectively led the strike for U.G.C. Scale of pay launched by the O.G.C.T.A.

I was never a teacher of rant and bombast, nor did I have the gift of delivering a fiery speech and adopt pyrotechnics to stun the students into appreciation. My earlier stints in Bonaigarh College, a place of beauties and bounties, mountains and fountains, and in B. J. B. College, Bhubaneswar, a premier college in the state, must have helped me. I always believed in a simple, down-to-earth critical interpretation of the text. In hindsight I thank Dr. M. Q. Khan for burdening me with his arrangement classes at sickening regularity. This perhaps added to my growth, maturity and experience as a teacher. During my tenure I still remember my frequent sorties to Kanika Library to help P.G. Students find out their reference books. How can I forget the Rickshaw ride that Dinesh Sir and I used to take on pay days to Homeopathy book shop in Cuttack? I cherish the honest, genuine, insightful, sincere and the most outspoken attitude of Dinesh Sir; smart, immaculate English of Tapan Bhai; suave, gentlemanly affection of Rajani Bhai; 'Work is Worship' mantra of Rabi Sir; brotherly love of Bhagaban Sir, Sanat Sir and Bibhu Bhai; the tremendous wit of Debapriya (Tiki) and the flavor of tea served by ever smiling Manu in the department with great fondness.

From 1984 to 1990 I studied the Book of Life with intense devotion and commitment. I passed through the whole gamut of human emotions during the period. I learnt the art of peaceful co-existence even with the staunchest of adversaries. Despite everything I told my students not to seek greatness but to remain good in the core.

III

In the meantime much water has already flown through river Mahanadi. Ravenshaw College has become University. Education has become mercenary. With experience, maturity and lessons learnt from the book of life I began my third innings

in Ravenshaw as a Visiting faculty in 2015. The triumvirate of Satya, Mrutyunjaya and I again sat together in the staff common room. Both Satya and Mrutyunjaya had Fulbright Fellowship under their belt and Mrutyunjaya had joined as a regular faculty. As I was hopping the stairs to the Department of English I overheard students talking and rushing to Mrutyunjaya Sir's class. Man with Midas touch he excelled as a teacher and could endear himself to the students.

Initial skepticism on my part gave way to intense passion and devotion to teaching. After retirement I had achieved a state *'calm of mind all passion spent'*. Sticking to the basics was my forte. I never budged an inch from it. I loved my students and valued my classes more than ever. The interpretations of the texts assigned – *Dr. Faustus, Othello, Macbeth and The Scarlet Letter* – became deeper and more profound. I felt, as it were, I was on cloud nine. Never before I was happier as teacher.

Delivering a speech on Public occasions had never been my cup of tea. But I would have had one of the greatest regrets of my life if I would not have spoken a few words about Mrutyunjaya on his retirement. The students were really sad at being deprived of his services as a teacher and a good human being. His superannuation, to me, may be considered as a watershed in the history of English Department in Ravenshaw University.

My study of Book of Life is yet to be complete. The more I read the more it remains to be read. I feel inadequate. As a student of literature I have no wish to translate blood into Ink. I have no regrets about what the department and life have given me. I can live for the rest of my life peacefully with the memory of my dear students, my trusted friends and my caring teachers. I have never hitched my wagon to a star. I want neither my statue to be installed nor my grave to be covered with flowers. I am happy, contented. I would like to see the department to prosper and be an incubation centre for good human beings. I am reminded of the lines of "Ode on Solitude" by Alexander Pope:

Thus let me live unseen, unknown
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, not a stone
Tell where I lie.

[Mr. Hadibandhu Satpathy is a renowned academician who has been in the teaching field for more than three decades. He has taught English at UG, P.G., and M.Phil. level in various colleges since 1977.]

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A Trip Down Memory Lane, Ravenshaw and Department of English

Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra
B.A.: 1972-74

More than 50 years back, setting foot in the college premises used to be nothing short of an event. Long before we passed our Matriculation, we dreamed of our days in the college. Somehow in our imagination, a college teacher was entirely different from his counterpart in school. How he would come to our class, how he'd be dressed, what kind of atmosphere would be there in the classroom. Well, there was no end to our thinking. At last, that day came and that much-awaited hour. 10th of July, 1969. At around 10.45 a.m. And my first-ever teacher in Ravenshaw was Soubhagya Sir (Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra). It was a small class of seven students. Alternative English (Alt. English or, still shorter version is Alt E... do not know why it is called so.) Sir introduced himself. He did not appear to be happy about our taking up Alt. English as our M.I.L. But he did not discourage us either and began his lecture. As I listened to him, I had an impression that though he was a teacher of English, he had great love for Odia language and literature. He was very affectionate and he spoke with an endearing smile. I must say with that single lecture he made me fall in love with the subject which had a great impact on me subsequently when a couple of years later I opted for English as my Hons subject.

The other matter is still more personal... Now, in our class there was a girl student who made our life really miserable. That was the age - 15/16 years –when you crave for a little recognition, you develop a tendency to make yourself conspicuous - you want to be seen. But this girl never gave us a scope for that. No matter who the teacher was or what the subject, hardly a question was put to the class when she would promptly stand up and answer the question. And, to our ill-luck, her answers were invariably correct. So we never got a chance to stand up and display a bit of our scholarship. Somehow, we could not take her sportively. We felt she was showing off. We grew jealous of her and how we wished and prayed that at least for once she should be proved wrong. And that happened in Soubhagya Sir's class He taught us prose in compulsory English and the book was' Brighter Reading'. On that day, one lesson was completed and there was still some time left for the bell to go.

'By the way, which poem has already been done?', Sir asked.

And, the great young lady, as expected, stood up and said:

'Sir, Composed Upon Westminister Bridge'

'Have you understood the poem?'

'Yes Sir, I have read it 2/3 times. I've even written down the summary of the poem.'

'That's very good, spell Westminster', Sir asked.

'Westminister'

Sir corrected her with a smile:

'That's not minister, that's minster'.

And, her reaction was a sight to be seen. She looked visibly embarrassed and grew red all over her face. It was a big blow to her boastful (it seemed so at that time but in retrospect it does not look so) utterance. It might be plain juvenile, a sort of school-hangover syndrome to stand out in the class and impress the teacher. Whatever it might be, we did enjoy her discomfiture!

But then I do not think Sir intended to snub the girl. I believe, through that small example, Sir wanted to tell us how, when we are over confident about certain matters, some simple things, like the correct spelling of a word in the title of Wordsworth's well-known sonnet, that we take for granted, may escape our notice.

But those personal things apart, we all liked him for his sincerity, punctuality and utmost clarity with which he taught. I have heard some teachers say that you should not make the whole of your lecture intelligible to the students for if they follow whatever you say, they tend to underestimate you. So, make sure, your talk sometimes goes over their head. Soubhagya Sir obviously did not believe in this theory. He never spoke very fast, never fumbled for words. He had just the right pace and the right set of vocabulary to make him understood. And we liked him for that. He was not much experienced then as a teacher, he was hardly 4/5 years old in the profession. But he was brimming with confidence. Of course, he was a name to reckon with even in those early years of his career. His first book of poems 'Atmanepadi' had made him a sensational success and he was considered a trend-setter in modern Odia poetry.

During these 50 odd years, Sir has gained weight. I use the word both in its literal as well as figurative sense. He has won many coveted awards, both at the State

and National level. But he has remained unchanged. I do not know how others feel. But for me, he is much the same man – the same endearing smile, the same affectionate words when we meet or when we talk over phone these days. He has not changed at all as men do when they become famous. Yes, one change is of course there. It is too prominent to miss. Those days he used to be clean-shaven and now he has, what I should say, an aggressive moustache. As a very old student I have taken liberty to make this personal comment. Hope Sir will not mind.

There was another teacher who taught us Alt. Eng. One Miss Celia Roberts. Very young and smartly-dressed, she looked fresh from her university. She had joined the Department as a visiting Faculty and she was from East Anglia. She was staying on the college campus. That's all we knew about her. We had an amusing experience in her very first class. She came, smiled at us, sat on her chair and asked us to respond to roll call. As she called out the first no., a student responded, 'Yes Madam'. (Now that is what we all did. 'Yes Sir' for a male teacher and 'Yes Madam' for a female) but she cried out (with a smile of course):

'Oh, do not call me Madam. I'm yet unmarried. You can say 'Yes Miss'.

She told us she had been assigned to do Walter Scott's 'Ivanhoe' in our class. And, she continued:

'But, I do not remember the story. I'd read it when I was of this height (with her hand she made a gesture to convey that she had read the novel as a very small child). Could I borrow a copy from anyone of you?' Someone handed her the book. She looked more than happy and, in the next class, she made a detailed presentation of the novel, writing the names of important characters and scenes of the story on the black-board. It was an example, I thought later, of how to teach the young students in a simple, uncomplicated way so as to help them follow the plot of the story.

A couple of months later I saw more of Miss Roberts in the field during Annual Athletic Meet of the College. She was doing the commentary in a lively manner along with Prof. Paresh Rout. After one particular event was over, she called out the names of the winners and announced:

'Please come to the Victory Stand. We want to congratulate you', and Mr. Paresh Rout commented with a smile about her: 'A very fine lady'.

In the same year, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Frontier Gandhi), a great patriot and an ardent follower of Gandhian principles, visited India on the occasion of Gandhiji's

centenary birth anniversary and had come to Odisha. I remember a big stage had been erected in the middle of the college field and when Mr. Khan climbed to the stage, there was loud clapping. He was garlanded by the President of the College Union, S. B. Women's College. Badshah Khan (as he was popularly known) was a towering figure. Whoever has seen him will not easily forget his complexion, his height and his nose. He addressed the gathering that cheered him as he spoke. He said he had expected great many changes in the country but was sad to see that India reeled under the same problems that beset India when Gandhiji was alive. He appealed to the students to follow the path that Gandhiji had shown us.

One day a teacher (he did not take our regular classes) with a register in hand entered our class in a dramatic way. It was around 10.30 or 11.15 in the morning. The way he walked and swung the register and, especially, the way he took attendance, gave an impression that he was different from other teachers. He wore goggles on his face. That was rather strange inside the classroom. No, it was not 'Jai Bangla'. That would come after a couple of years. After the first roll no., he called 9, 14, 28 and some six seven random nos. and then the very last roll no. Then, quite uninterestedly, he closed the register. The whole act gave an impression that he did not consider taking attendance a teacher's job or if it was so, he did not think it so. Then he stood up and declared 'Rest are marked present.' He stood before his table and facing the class of 128 students, with goggles still on his face, exclaimed, 'Behold' ... and, for a few seconds he remained silent. We all wondered what he was aiming at. And, breaking the silence, he resumed, 'Behold he. Single in the field, / Yon solitary Highland Lass! / Reaping and singing by herself / Stop here, or gently pass!'

Luckily we had read the poem in school. So, it was clear he was going to explain the meaning of the famous poem of Wordsworth. He did explain the opening lines in a very impressive way, emphasising every word and the effect they produced if the lines were recited properly. The bell rang and he left and as he was leaving he introduced himself as P. M. Nayak. That was the lone class we had with whom we came to know as Prof. Pabitra Mohan Nayak. Much later we came to know that he had been an outstanding debater in his student days. Just the next year in 1970 he was transferred to G. M. College, Sambalpur. After years in 1989, he was invited to Vikram Deb College, Jeypore (where I was on the staff), to give a talk on the occasion of Vikram memorial Lecture (an annual affair of the college). Before it started, he was in the Principal's room for some time. I was so happy to see my teacher. Hesitantly, I went up to him and said, 'Sir, I was your student 20 years ago at Ravenshaw College.' He looked at me in

some amount of surprise and replied, 'Oh, is that so? I am so happy to hear that but you remain unaltered.' He then started reminiscing his days at Ravenshaw. Sir made that evening memorable with his unique style of speaking English and presenting the contents of his talk in a very appealing manner. The audience was fascinated by Pabitra Sir's talk. It was clear from their facial expression and from their loud applause that resounded in the hall.

In the month of August, there was an untoward incident on the campus. We were having a class in Room No. 21 (Arts Block). A message came from the office to suspend the class. The teacher left in a hurry, we rushed out of the classroom and went straight down to the ground floor and then on to the main gate where there was quite a crowd of agitating students and lots of police officials. Soon we got the news that there had been wild indiscriminate lathi-charge to which our Principal Prof. Debendra Chandra Mishra and English Professor Sarbeswar Dash had fallen victims. I saw 5/6 students carrying Prof. Dash on their shoulder (Sir was saying…are mate chhadidia re, mu chalikijibi). I'd see more of him in the coming years.

Before I come to our Hons classes, I'd like to say a few lines about another incident that happened in our 1st year degree class. It was in a sense amusing and serious too. A man, looking very simple and unassuming, entered our classroom with a register and a book in his hand. He took nearly 20 minutes for the roll call and never raised his head. I was sitting in the first row and I could see very clearly that he was shaking all over, apparently out of nervousness.

Then he put his signature on the attendance Register, closed it and opened the book. It was Dickens' 'A Tale of Two Cities' (abridged version was prescribed for us). And, he asked us to open the first chapter 'The Dover Mail climbed up the Shooter's Hill'. Our teacher was simply reading out the printed matters and it seemed he was taking care to completely cover his face with the book. It was great fun for the students. Someone said 'not audible' and some other cried 'not visible'. His feeble voice had just been drowned in the clamour of the classroom. And during this confusion the bell rang and the teacher left quietly – a shy, nervous and utterly miserable person. After his rather diffident, inglorious exit, some of us gathered together. It was decided that in the next class of this teacher, we would maintain absolute silence and as he started teaching, we would count 1, 2, 3 and yell in chorus with all our strength. We visualized the amazement and the ensuing discomfiture of the poor teacher and our decision was transmitted to the rest of the class. Next week as he came, we all stood up in great respect and waited till he asked us to sit down. Customary roll call was over and Dickens

was opened to a deceptively disciplined class that soon would burst into a pandemonium. Hardly had the teacher started reading the first line when, as per our design, we audibly counted and sent up a scream that must have shaken the whole college. The trembling teacher was flabbergasted at this sudden uproar. He removed Dickens and specks from his face and unable to comprehend what was happening, he looked at the class in utter disbelief. He was probably trying to guess if he had done something unwittingly to provoke this huge outcry but having apparently failed to find any reason, he just waited for the noise to subside and when the class was quiet again he, in all innocence, asked:

'What is this?'

This utterance, simple and harmless, occasioned a response from the students that virtually brought the roofs down. The whole class rocked in wild, uncontrollable laughter. Even some girls who were reserve and probably had not contributed to the outcry a little earlier, now got carried away by the spontaneity of the occasion. Our English teacher stood speechless, a mute miserable spectator to this frenzied ongoing. His continuation in the classroom any further, he must have thought, would be problematic for the adjacent rooms. He left with a trail of catcalls behind him. But what followed half an hour later was certainly not to our advantage. If Dickens remained untaught, for gross misconduct inside the classroom, the Principal announced, the teacher concerned would not come again and he would not be replaced by any of his departmental colleagues, which meant we would have to prepare Dickens on our own.

The plight of the teacher might have been amusing then but some years later when I took up teaching as my profession, I realized how tough and demanding the job of a teacher is (if one wants to be a good teacher) and how, therefore, students need to be told in details how they should conduct themselves in a classroom and how they should be polite, respectful before their teachers. For being a veritable part of that planned pandemonium, I have never excused myself in spite of the fact that I was very young then. Later we learnt that the teacher was one Mr. Budhadeb Brahma and that he had all along been a bright student and had topped in his M.A. examination and probably won a Gold Medal. We further learnt that he sought a transfer, succeeded and left Ravenshaw. Were we responsible for his decision to seek a transfer? Maybe, we were.

In 1972, our Hons classes started. There were about 25/27 teachers in the Department. All of them were distinctly impressive in their own way. They were scholarly and in some of them there was a curious blend of scholarship and angularities. Let me begin with the HOD and Professor Sarbeswar Dash who was heading the department.

He was a household name in the teaching community. Like countless others, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been a student of this celebrity. He taught us modern poetry. Now we had a book 'Queen Victoria' by Lytton Strachey. We found it tough and it had not been assigned to any teacher. We had approached Prof Dash to take just one class to explain the contents and style of the book but he seemed to be too busy with P.G classes and we never found him free enough.

One afternoon, as Prof. Dash was returning to his room after his P.G class had been over, we literally blocked his way and implored him to come to our class. He agreed reluctantly and said, 'Okay, I'll be in your class for 15/20 minutes. I'll have to go back to those P.G. students again. Some of their books are yet to start.' With that he came but spoke for about one and half hours. History of biography-writing, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Johnson's Lives of Poets to Strachey's Eminent Victorians and his debunking method and even a film on Queen Victoria which he had seen – everything was covered in that single lecture. We had been transported to a different world as it were. Whether it was Queen Victoria or Louis MacNeice's "Prayer Before Birth" or Eliot's *Marina* or a lecture on Shakespearean tragedy – when Prof. Dash spoke, it was altogether a different experience. His casual manners outside the classroom were set aside and he spoke like a man possessed.

If we found Prof. Dash awe-inspiring as a teacher, we were sometimes amused by the strange way he reacted to certain situations. It puzzled us to accept that the man who taught literature with such verve and energy and interpreted characters and situations with such rare insight, sometimes behaved like a little child, sulking and irrationally obstinate apparently, if certain things were not to his liking. If there was any unpleasant incident on the campus and if he got the news and felt that it might get worse, he was a sight to be seen. He would rush to the spot limping and try to diffuse the tension. If he failed, he would dash his head against a wall or a piece of rock (whatever was there at hand), breaking his specks and sometimes his head and not caring for the blood oozing out of the wound. And, everything would come to a standstill. This did annoy the students sometimes, but in the face of this Gandhian onslaught, they could not possibly continue further. Prof. Dash would set things right by inflicting pain on himself.

Talking about Prof. Dash, I remember one evening in 1973. There was a departmental function. We all, teachers and students, had assembled in a Hall to bid farewell to Dr. B. K. Tripathi who was going to Himachal Pradesh University as Associate Professor on deputation. The hall was packed. Sir and Prof. Bibekananda Mukherjee of

Bengali Department were sitting in the front row. I was sitting just behind them. Suddenly Prof. Dash turned, caught hold of my neck, drew me towards him and said: 'Aare dekhre (look here) highly romantic sentiments expressed'. I did not know how to respond to those unexpected words from him. A few lines in Odia had been scribbled on the desk... 'jete bhabile bi tumakubhulihuena'. Sir used to be very formal with students and though he had his lighter moments, they were few and far between. The overall image that we had of him was that of a man who was simple in his bearing but very stern and serious and someone who would not brook slightest laxity in study. And so, those words from him came as a big surprise. But more surprises were there in store for me/us. Mr. Sujeet Mohanty, who had newly joined the department (he taught us O' Neill's *Desire under the Elms*), sang a couple of songs, starting with 'Mein shayar to nehin' from Raj Kapoor's Bobby which was showing in Grand cinema hall, suddenly announced that Sir would sing a song. That was simply unbelievable. Somehow, we could not associate Sir with singing. Was Mr. Mohanty joking – but no. Sir, after initial hesitation, got up and walked towards the mike. There were loud whisperings in the hall. Mr Mohanty looked at the audience in some amount of annoyance and said, "Sir is going to sing. There should be absolute silence." Whereupon, without a moment's delay, Sir said with a smile," No, no – free responses allowed." We looked expectantly at Prof. Dash now that we were sure he was going to sing. And, he sang. I remember it was an old Bengali song by K. L. Saigal. He sang so well and with such feelings that there was a loud applause at the end. As Sir came back to his seat, Prof. Mukherjee stood up, hugged him and exclaimed, 'I never knew you're such a fine singer!'

While at Khallikote College, Berhampur Prof. Dash was invited to address the English seminar. I had been to his residence with a colleague of mine. Among other things, he spoke of his days at Minnesota State University. He said how he wanted to continue his old habits like his taking bath in the morning. But, after the first day's experience, he decided he would go to have his bath at the very last even if it meant discontinuation of his old habit. We were naturally curious to know the reason. Humorously he replied, 'What to do, all Adams and Eves.' The scantily-clothed young men and women around the bathrooms must have been quite disturbing a sight to the purist that Prof. Dash was.

Let me recount some more interesting moments from the Department of English and from our teachers. In 1974 we were only a few months away from the final examination (in the month of April) and some of the texts remained untaught. In this context I'm reminded of a very amusing remark made by Late Prof O' Brien (Dr. A P

O'Brien was a well-known professor of English at Ravenshaw in the 1940s, 50s. For a couple of years he was a professor at B.H.U.) At Cuttack, his residence at Tulasipur, was not far from ours at Alisha Bazar and one of his sons was my classmate. I often went there and enjoyed speaking/ listening to the old Professor. He'd recall his days in B.H.U.:

'It was a time of glory for me, man when I was in Benaras. I met Edmund Blunden, I met Raja Rao. I had tea with Radhakrishnan (former President of India) ... here bloody I'm rotting, nobody seems to care...' He would enquire about our classes and was a bit worried about our Lear not being started. And that's the time when Mr. M. Q. Khan came from B. J. B. College on transfer. He told us he'd be doing King Lear in our class. After a few days I went to Tulasipur. Prof O'Brien told me, 'Gopi (that's how he called me), I heard Lear is at last started. Who is doing it?' And when I mentioned Mr. Khan's name, he blurted out:

'Quamrrudin! He will not teach you man. He is busy with a hundred different works and he has no time to teach.' As he said this he smiled and continued, 'You'll see... from the first scene he'll jump to the storm scene and in the storm he'll vanish.' Saying this he laughed loudly. Dr. O'Brien's prediction nearly came true. Mr. Khan did make a long jump and almost landed in the storm scene but certainly he did not vanish.

Till date I believe he did that not because he wanted to cover up the course anyhow but because we didn't have enough time before our final exam and he wanted to concentrate on important scenes of the play. But then, newly drunk in the delight of literature, we wanted the text to be done in details. We wanted to enjoy the charm and music of Shakespeare's play and we were certainly not prepared for such acrobatics on the greatest playwright. A sensitive and affectionate teacher can know from the face of his students what they actually want. Perhaps Sir understood us for he did not abandon us in the storm but led us through it and led us well. I clearly remember he acquainted us with other tragedies of Shakespeare. After graduation I went to Utkal University to do my P.G. and I must say in the process I missed classes of some of my teachers. Often I'd ask my friends in Ravenshaw and they would speak, among others, of Qamruddin Sir. He was teaching them *Moby Dick* and, how while describing the whaling expedition, he would dramatize the scene and become a veritable Captain Ahab.

Popular as he was as a teacher, Prof. Khan was more popular as a man. No matter what the nature and amount of provocation was, he seldom lost his temper. Cool and composed with a disarming smile, he was always a pleasant company.

There were some teachers who were good at teaching the texts but they expressed their occasional annoyance in an unusual manner. I'd like to cite an example. There was one Prof R. C. Tripathy, an acknowledged authority on English Grammar, who taught us 'Selections from E. M. Foster'. He taught us very well and we liked him for his queer smile and his humour. He'd come to the class, usually wearing a full shirt and, sitting on his chair, roll up his sleeve to his elbow and start teaching. One day, looking a bit flustered, he came and after usual attendance, looked at us with a smile and began, what I should like to say, a very unusual piece of dialogue. Unusual, since he presented a monologue in the form of a dialogue. This is how he started, with a smile of course:

Dear students, some of you have complained before our professor and Head that I'm not teaching but cheating in your class. Now, you all will be surprised to know that you're right. In fact, I'm not teaching but cheating.

But you cannot do anything to me.

Why?

Because, I am a teacher.

Now, my advice to you is this: you too start cheating.

When?

When you become teachers.

All the time he was asking questions and answering them himself. We kept on looking at him, puzzled, unable to make out what he was trying to say. And, suddenly he got up and left the class. He never came to our class again. What an unusual way of expressing one's anger!

We learnt later that he had been very much annoyed with our class since some students had complained against him before the Head. His contention was that those students, if they were not happy with his teaching, could have come to him and told him where things went wrong, instead of meeting the Professor. This was unbecoming of students of literature, he argued.

I often hear people speaking about legendary English teachers the Department once had, the likes of whom are seldom seen these days. The English Department has organized seminars and conferences from time to time and given us opportunities to see them on stage and hear them speak. One such teacher was Prof P. K. Pati, known for his fearlessness, his wit and humour. In 1985, he had been invited to the All Orissa

English Teachers' Conference as Chief Guest (in one session). When Meeting was over, he was requested to inaugurate a Book Exhibition. He held the scissors in his hand and cut the ribbon and asked with a smile, 'But where are the books' and, on being told it was there in the Department, three-storeyed up from the ground, he said,' Oh, remote control' (television with remote control was beginning to invade us those days in a big way).

In 1997, Prof. M. Q. Khan's book 'Eastern Contribution to Western Renaissance' was to be rereleased by the then Chief Minister J. B. Patnaik at the Hotel Swosti, Bhubaneswar. Some political turmoil was there at the Centre and Mr. Patnaik had been to Delhi.

Prof. Pati, at the start of the function, said, 'Friends, we are going to play *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark and elaborated that the Chief Minister was the chief attraction of the function which has to be conducted anyhow without the protagonist.' Then he continued to say in a lighter vein:

'One day, Qamruddin came to me and said: Sir, I have conceived an idea regarding my research project and I'd love to work under your supervision. And I said, 'It's not possible since I am ignorant about the topic you've chosen. How can I guide you?' And he said, 'Sir, you needn't do anything. I'll do the whole thing. You'll simply sign it and give me your blessings.' Then Prof. Pati winked at the audience with a smile and said, 'When you get a Ph.D. scholar for a mere signature and blessings, why not accept.' And, he continued:

'You see, the scholar conceived the idea not for ten months but ten years (he referred implicitly to Prof. Khan's decade long research work) and you can see the beautiful baby.' Saying this he held Prof Khan's book in his hand and showed it to the audience that rocked in laughter. Wit and humour was native to Prof Pati. It was never laboured or contrived. It was natural, spontaneous, on-the-spot and his comic bantering cheered up his surroundings. I consider myself fortunate for having come in contact with him though those moments were brief. I wish I had spent more time in his company.

Some other teachers come to mind more because it was a fun time in their classes. And, one such teacher was Mr. Amulya Samant. He came in, what I should say, eternal terelyne light-yellow colour half-shirt. He looked at no one in particular. He looked over our head, we thought, at the blank wall and his expression was as blank as the wall before him. But he spoke fluently. Synonyms abounded in his lecture, gushing forth like from a perennial stream. And, the students (boys and girls alike) had a free

gossip session, largely unnoticed by his big blank eyes. One day, we all were talking, as always in his class, as if the teacher did not exist. Suddenly, the clamour came to a stop, for no apparent reason. And, taking advantage of this brief lull, our teacher, a pitiable man now, with a surprised expression in his eyes, said:

'Why are you shouting? At least, lend me a sympathetic ear.'

Needless to say, the class burst into an uncontrollable storm of laughter at this unexpected quote from *Julius Caesar*. Antony's whole speech is filled with rhetorical devices that encourage the listeners to be on his side but we were in no mood to listen to this earnest appeal. Our boisterous banter continued unabated. It was really too unkind of us. Later we learnt Sir was suffering from some psychological disorder. At the end of the month, Madam (Mrs. Samant) used to come to collect salary (it was disbursed in cash those days) since on some earlier occasions Mr. Samant's salary had not reached home, in full.

And, now a few words about our teacher Sri B. J. B. Mahapatra. With a brilliant academic career (the former Chief Minister of Odisha Sri J. B. Patnaik has mentioned it in his autobiography, Asamapta Atmalipi), he was known for his witty remarks. In this context, I'm reminded of a very serious (but amusing at the same time) incident. A very close friend of mine didn't perform (M.A. exam) as well as he really deserved and went into depression. To improve his class, he took the exam again next year. He came to know that Sri Mahapatra had got the Poetry paper (Milton and Others). He told me much later how he had been, along with another friend, to the Quarters of Sri B.J.B. Mahapatra. It was a winter morning. Sir had been unwell for the last few days and was basking in the early sunlight with a paper in his hand. His small frame had shrunk into the big armchair. My friend introduced himself and hesitantly broached the topic. Sir immediately assured him with these words:

'I know you. Do not worry. I've given you good marks.' My friend thought Sir might have mistaken him to be someone else and he didn't want to take any chance and so, in order to confirm that Sir had really evaluated his paper, said, 'Sir, this time I have done really well. In fact, my poetry paper has been the best.'

'I know. You're a good student. I told you not to worry. Why do you repeat the same thing?'

'Sir, my first answer was on Milton. I have profusely quoted from 'Paradise Lost'.

'I know your handwriting. It's not so good but I remember your answer in details. And I have awarded good marks.' This time Sir sounded quite convincing. Sir made remarks on his handwriting but he wanted to be hundred percent sure of the fact. Why not ask him again:

'Sir, I'm afraid there is some confusion. My answer on Milton…'

Probably this was too much for Sir to bear any more. He flared up and screamed, 'Oh! to hell with Milton and his infernal world. I'm down with fever and you talk to me of Milton.' Agitated, he slumped on the armchair. For some time he had clean forgotten about his fever and that he had been ill for some days.

After a while, Sir got up, held my friend's hand, took him a little away from the other friend and told him, 'Please do not mind. After Shakespeare, if there is another poet for whom I have all my respect and admiration, it's Milton. I shouldn't have used those harsh words for him. Go back home, relax. You'll be happy to see your results.' When results were out, my friend had secured 62 in that paper.

This particular incident, as narrated by my friend about Sri Mahapatra, was a reflection of the intensive reading of the teachers by those days and the kind of language they used even in extreme anger. And, how they carried themselves with grace even under sufficient provocation. Some other teachers who made our class-room teaching a lovable experience were Dr. Susama Tej, Dr. Satya Shankar Mishra, Dr. Deba Sadangi, Dr. M. J. Das, Dr. B. K. Tripathy, Dr. J. N. Patnaik among others.

When I discontinued my studies in the very first year of the college, I was upset and went into a sort of, what they quite often call these days, 'depression'. Life seemed so dark and murky. Nothing could hold my interest any more. But things brightened up just the next year. With new friends and the brilliant team of teachers that was already there, things looked so fresh and colourful. How soon does life spring back to life darkened briefly by problems beyond one's control. A few of my classmates and friends went ahead of me, doing their Hons and subsequently their Master's in English. One was Mrs. (Dr.) Sudatta Patnaik, quiet and serious in studies. She was a familiar name since she often wrote for the Odia magazine "Pourusha". Those days we subscribed to this popular and, spiritually-inclined magazine, along with Bhavan's Journal at home. It felt so good to know that among young boys and girls there was a regular writer. Later I learnt that she went to Canada to do her Ph.D. There was Dr. Bhagabat Nath who was reserved and reticent but keenly observant. Nothing seemed to escape his notice. I must mention the name of one student of our Pre-University days. He too did

his M.A. in English. He was not in our Section, but both of us had Economics as one of the Optional subjects and we often sat together on one bench. I do not remember what drew us together. We did, of course, exchanged pleasantries. Nothing, however, was common between us except our surname and height. Fair-complexioned with a simple unassuming appearance, Dipak had dense hair on his head. He appeared to be very serious in studies and was all concentration as teachers spoke. While I talked a lot, he was rather reticent. While I was fun-loving, he was more focused in studies. When I cut jokes, after my nature and habit, I noticed there was no reaction on his face or, at best, he acknowledged it with a faint smile. One day, I remember, as we sat side by side on one bench, as usual, I ruffled his seemingly unkempt hair and said if he had taken his bath that day, jokingly. But his face, usually calm and composed, turned red and he said, 'Why do you comment like that...' in an agitated voice. I do not remember to have argued with him but I wondered if I had said or done anything so serious so as to provoke him thus. Maybe, I had thought myself to be too close to him and he, perhaps, did not think so – a thing which possibly occasioned this unexpected reaction from him... Later on I learnt the reticent boy excelled in debates and elocution and was once Literary Champion of the College. After his Post-graduation (do not know if he ever joined any college as a lecturer for a brief period) he joined Odisha High Court and made a name as a lawyer. He rose to become the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India.

My discontinuation in studies had its advantages. And, the foremost among them was a group of friends who gave altogether a different dimension to my experience of life. Sometimes I have a feeling that without those friends I would have been possibly a much poorer being than what I am now. And, thereby I have come to believe in the workings of what they say 'destiny'. Among those friends I'd like to mention Aloke Banerjee. His residence was/is just a 10 minute walk from our place but we had never met before. It was in Hons class that we got introduced to each other (1972). That year on December 25 (that was his birthday and, affectionately, they call him 'Jesu'... something very unusual in an orthodox Brahmin family) he invited me to his place along with Terence O'Brien (both of them were from Stewart School) and with that our friendship began that has smoothly endured half a century. I'd like to mention here that Aloke's paternal grandfather (Late Makhanlal Banerjee played Ramachandra in the first ever Odia film 'Sita Bibaha'). And, his paternal grandmother Late Uma Banerjee played the title role in the second Odia film 'Lalita' and the former Governor of Assam Late Loknath Misra was in the role of Bidyapati. I had the rare opportunity to spend much time in the company of Uma Banerjee, listening to her engrossing stories of the

olden times. One evening she told us humorously, as always, how Bidyapati (Loknath Misra) was interested in neither Nilamadhaba nor Lalita since his father (eminent writer and poet Godabarish Misra) was against his acting in film and how the famous man one day landed on the set to see first- hand what was going on there and, spending some time there in the company of the director, producer and other artists, gave him the permission to go ahead and the film was made. However, Loknath Misra never acted in another film. It was really quite amusing to hear from her that while she was an established actress in Bengali film industry with films like Swayamsidha, Uttam Kumar, the outstanding Bengali actor of our times, was a new-comer before her. Among other friends I'd like to mention Kishore Mahanty with whom I had been to distant Assam to begin my teaching career at Nabajyoti College, Kalgachia, in Kamrup district. It's another story that we stayed there for a few days and came back to Odisha. In fact we joined the college during summer vacation and left it while the vacation continued. Kishore was a successful bureaucrat and later became Collector of Cuttack. It was interesting to see him in a T-shirt, sitting among the joyous crowd of Cuttack, and doing the commentary as the idols were carried along the road, in gorgeous procession, on the immersion day of Durga Puja. There was Ashok Tarenia who during his long association with the Department of Higher Education was of much help for many of his classmates and friends. Dr. Satyabrata Das and Dr. Mrutunjay Mohanty (both had visited the United States on a Fulbright Fellowship) and stayed at Boston (Harvard and John Hopkins Universities respectively), Dr. Kamala Prasad Mahapatra who retired as Regional Director of H. E. and who is a very visible face these days on different Channels at Debate time, Mr. Benudhar Lenka, full of fun and comic bantering, retired as Principal of Banki Autonomous College, the ever-polite Hadibandhu Satpathy, the tall singer TapanPalit (once during our Hons days Tapan told me that like millions in the country and abroad he too loved listening to the songs of Lata Mangeshkar but he had another personal reason,. His mother's name was Lata too, and I liked it) and the short banker Biru Ghose (who in the beginning of his career lost lots of money since he was weak in counting and, at the end of the month, few hundreds went towards recovery!) and many others like Ananta, Joachim who gave a different colour to the college life. And, among the girls (they'll continue to remain as teenage girls despite time and age) who made college life so lively and so memorable… I'd like to mention Dr. Snehaprava Das, well-known poet and translator who has rendered many Odia classics into English, Krishna Tripathy, Sweta Patnaik, Manorama Panda, Rashmi Mishra, Trupti Nayak and many others. Life rolls on with inevitable changes on its course. Some of them are to

our liking and some others are not so. But we have to accept things that come our way. English Department with its teachers and friends has helped me/us understand literature and, more importantly, life and have taught us to accept it in its entirety. Those students, studying here at present, have reasons to feel proud and privileged that they belong to a Department that has such a glorious past and that it has completed its 100 years of stupendous achievements. As I enter Ravenshaw campus and walk on its soil, I do experience a feeling of great thrill and excitement. All those years with their sweet fragrance come flooding to my mind and I stand inundated. My teachers, my friends, the classrooms where we sat, studied and gossiped, the Kanika Library with its bewildering collection of books and where sometimes surprisingly we didn't get the books we asked for, the beautiful quadrangle with the Sundial in the middle, the path that joined the East and the West (defying Kipling!) Hostels, and beyond the compound wall lay the book-store the Kitab Mahal and its unforgettable owner Mr. Jagdish Chandra Khandei who had a soft corner for book-lovers (he must have gifted away scores of brand new books to hundreds of young Ravenshawvians... he told me once to take a copy of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* which I was just eagerly reading fast, standing... it cost only Rs. 5/- but I didn't have the money that day with me and I haven't made the payment till date and the noble soul is not there anymore with us), SNACO that sold among other things cold drinks like Pinola and Vinola (the names sound alien to the younger generation), the Appetizer where we flocked to take 'Aluchop' with mild ginger flavour at reasonable price (God knows where that alldevouring hunger came from those days)... It's a very happy thing that the Department of English is having its Centenary Celebrations sometime this year (the P.G. Department was founded in the year 1922) and is bringing out a Souvenir to mark the occasion. Many of our legendary teachers of English are sadly no more with us. This is an occasion to keep alive their sweet memories and their contributions to the cause of English studies in our State. I'd like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to the teachers of the Department and the members of the Organising Committee for giving me this opportunity to share my experiences. Long live Ravenshaw and the Department of English.

[Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra is a renowned academician, poet and translator. He has translated into English some selected Odia poems of Jayanta Mohapatra and noted poet and film-maker Gulzar. Dr. Mishra retired as the Principal of J. K. B. K. Government College, Cuttack.]



English Department in my Time

Mrs. Sweta Patnaik
M.A.: 1974-76

What does an eighteen-year-old do when confronted with such existential question as ½To be or not to be½? To be a Ravenshawvian or continue in a Womens' College to do her MA in English? I had my schooling from St. Joseph Convent for Girls in Cuttack and after school joined the famous ShailabalaWomens' College. After graduation, in the summer of 1974, I was overwhelmed with uncertainties of my future course of action. After much dilly-dallying I decided to take the plunge and face the challenge of discovering the new world – to join Ravenshaw College, a hallowed century-old Institution where anybody who was somebody in Odisha has studied.

On one expectant rainy morning, I, along with Banashree, my companion from school days, arrived on the college campus to take admission. We had seen the imposing brick coloured building from outside. But stepping inside was a different experience altogether. Hundreds of young boys and girls (in separate groups!) moving hurriedly and some walking leisurely, as if they were moving in a beautiful garden. And indeed, the 'quadrangle', with manicured lawns and seasonal flowers was a delightful panorama. Having deposited the fees in the college counter, we decided to have a look at our Department. After crossing the quadrangle and the Science block, we arrived at the Commerce Block, the building where the Department of English is located. Before joining the college we had heard many 'stories' from the seniors in school about the Commerce Department. Unlike today, Commerce was the last refuge of any student to pursue studies in our time. Many students who joined the Department were not very academically inclined. They had many other 'pursuits' in life and one of them was to stand on the road and pass comments when a girl student passed by. We were warned to be extra cautions while negotiating the Commerce Department and no doubt when both of us were advancing, from behind we heard a rude comment, 'Hathi MeraSathi'. Ever smiling Banashree, who was physically well endowed, took it in her stride and we continued in our mission to discover the new land!!

After a few days of admission, the classes started. If I remember correctly, out first class was taken by Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, a Dhoti and Kurta clad gentleman. When he sauntered into the classroom, I never thought that he was the HOD. Looks could be so deceptive! When he started his lecture, we were spellbound. His diction, his accent and choice of words were music to the ear. The discovery of the new world started with this most extraordinary experience.

I had not gone to a coed institution before. Being amongst so many young men was very disconcerting, initially. But gradually, we girls, 10 of us, were made to feel at home in no time by the boys. Unlike in other Departments where the girl students normally wait in the corridor till the teacher arrives, in our Department, we used to feel comfortable, being in the classroom gossiping. The boys were very cordial and civil. There was good bonhomie. It took me a few days to settle down and absorb the new environment.

Classroom lectures were exciting. I still remember many of the teachers in the Department who taught us. Besides Prof. Dash, Quamaruddin Khan, Jeetu Patnaik, Sujit Mohanty, Chinmoy Jena, Bibhu Padhi, to name a few. I had American Literature as my special paper. Never before I had enjoyed my studies so much. For the first time in my student life, I realised that education is not only to pass the examination and to get a degree. It opened up my mind to a vast new world to be explored and enjoyed. The world of literature gave a new meaning to my life. Emotions which I could not recognize before, life I lived but was not aware, became more clear to me.

Ravenshaw Days were like living in a dream. It was freedom, to be able to make choices, to be allowed to be oneself, to realize one's true calling. I was not very inclined to participate in any extracurricular activity which the Department offered. My world revolved around the classroom and my home. But this limited world was for me, the most enjoyable period of my life.

The two years in the Department passed like a dream. Marriage and time took me away from the friends but not out of memory. Now and then when I sit alone after a hard day's work, silently and stealthily Ravenshaw days come and crowd my mind. The other day when Anshuman Mohanty called me and introduced himself as a student of M.A. from English Department of Ravenshaw University, I was overwhelmed with myriad emotions and memories. I felt as if I was still living in the world of young boys and girls who were walking on the corridor in the Department with million dreams in their hearts and sunshine in their smiles. Faces of many friends flashed in my mind's eye, still young and with smile in their face. Anshuman told me about the proposed Centenary Celebrations and invited me to attend the same. Because of my present circumstances, I am unable to travel. I would carry this regret; missing a life time chance to meet old friends and mingle with present generation of students. I am saddened and simultaneously elated that though I will not be there with all my friends who would attend the function, in them I would find a place. I also feel proud to belong to a century old Department. Like me many had come before, many more would come in future to drink from the ever-flowing fountain of knowledge.

Long live English Department! Long live Ravenshaw University!



Memories of My Alma Mater and My Experience in Administration Relating to Education

Mr. Ashok Tarenia
M.A.: 1974-76

It is a great occasion for which any student of the English Department of erstwhile Ravenshaw College (now University) would feel proud of since centenary year of the Department is being celebrated this year. It was way back in 1974 when I stepped into Ravenshaw College as a student of 1st year MA in English. Tho-se days Ravenshaw College was well known for imparting quality education. The popular saying, "Anybody who is somebody in Odisha is a Ravenshawvian" continued to ring in my ears.

The Post Graduate Department of English was one of the oldest departments of the College and it was manned by many big names and luminaries who had singular contributions in the field of English literature.

After my admission was over, I went to meet Prof. Sarbeswar Dash to get his blessings. I was simply thrilled to see this god-like man in his chamber and the very presence gave me a rare feeling of spirituality about him. He was highly disciplined. Every student had tremendous love and respect for him.

I remember a day in 1988 when I was working as Additional Executive Officer of Cuttack Municipality. Prof. Sarbeswar Dash came to my room and was very happy seeing me. I thought he would not recognize me since I was not a prominent student but he could place me right and spoke about the days at Ravenshaw. Then after a while he became very quiet and seemed lost in thought. I could make out from his expression that he wanted to say something but was feeling hesitant. When I insisted he told me something that really disturbed me. I came to know that Prof. Dash had come all the way from Puri for his grandson's birth certificate and had gone to the concerned clerk of Health section of Cuttack Municipality. The concerned Clerk asked Sir to make some payment for the work. I called the clerk and scolded him in the presence of Sir (Prof. Dash) and I assured Sir that I would send the Birth Certificate of his grandson to his residence at Puri through a messenger. Sir received the certificate in his residence

at Puri the next day. Sir wrote me a letter thanking me profusely. I am grateful to God when I think of this incident that such a great teacher ever came to my office and that I was of some help to him.

Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra had been a brilliant student and had topped in his batch. But his teaching was not very impressive. He was very witty and humorous.

Prof. M. Q. Khan was a very good organiser, apart from being an affectionate teacher.

Sri Paresh Rout was a very competent teacher. He was teaching *Tom Jones*. He used to say that he came from a family of doctors. Prof. D. K. Ray, who taught metaphysical poetry, was very affectionate. He rendered his helping hand to any student who approached him.

I came in contact with Sri Frederick Wright when I was Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education. He was teaching *Book of Job*. Sri Sujit Mohanty, Sri Chinmoy Jena and Dr. Bibhu Padhi were highly spirited.

I had the opportunity of meeting my old friends when I was Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education. I also met my old friends during my incumbency as ADM Cuttack, in various Departments of the Government and as Commissioner, Land Records and Settlement, Odisha.

Now I think it is proper on my part to highlight some points on the changing pattern of Educational system. Educational Administration in the State has been restructured to place administrative Officers (I.A.S. and O.A.S.) in all the key posts, earlier manned by eminent academicians of the State in the recent past. All the key posts such as DHE, Director Primary Education, Teacher Education and Chairman, CHSE etc are currently managed by the Administrative Officers. The Administrative Officers are less accessible as far as my knowledge goes. What happens is, a teacher is not comfortable to put forth his grievances before the Administrative Officers in most of the cases.

Earlier, the views of the academicians (DHE and other HODs) were given top priority at the Government level. The Secretary of the Education Department was paying utmost respect to the DPI and other academicians. Now it is completely reverse. One will be surprised to know that a former Secretary of H. E. Department made one DHE stand before him and did not have the courtesy to offer him a seat. This incident took place in presence of the subordinates of DHE and the Clerks of the Secretariat. If this system continues the DHE will not be able to exercise control over his/her sub-ordinates.

A retired civil servant was posted as Administrator of Ravenshaw University in the beginning. He emphasized mostly on development of infrastructure like construction or renovation of the building, preservation of heritage building etc. Unnecessary expenditure was incurred on various scores. Imparting quality education was not his priority.

A former Secretary of School and Mass Education Department ensured putting on uniform by teachers instead of suggesting measures to improve the Educational standard of the students.

A very honest and hardworking Ex Principal of Ravenshaw College once spoke to me that a Secretary of H. E. Department used to attend the High Court at least twice a month. His Personal Assistant called the said Principal of Ravenshaw College every time to arrange lunch in the Circuit House at Cuttack and to remain present in the Circuit House during the visit of the Secretary. Such kind of attitude of the then Secretary is deplorable.

The portfolio like Health and Education should remain under the control of the Hon'ble Chief Minister for better functioning of the College and Schools.

The election to the Students' Union must be stopped at any cost. The students are going to College for studies. Their parents never want their sons and daughters to get themselves involved in electioneering. The election completely vitiates the study environment of the College or University.

A guideline was framed by the Government in H. E. Department for transfer of teachers. The first person to violate the guideline was a Bureaucrat.

My two years at the Department of English in Ravenshaw College are never to be forgotten as those priceless years shaped my career.

[Mr. Ashok Kumar Tarenia is a former I.A.S. officer who has worked with various capacities such as Commissioner Land Records & Settlement, Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Minister Higher Education etc. He was conferred National Award from Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam for controlling liquor in Odisha during Parliament Election.]

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Reminiscences as remain vibrant in the Memory-lane

Mr. Kishore Kumar Mohanty
M.A.: 1974-76

Looking back with awe, satisfaction, complacency and pride, one loves to get mingled with the no-holds-barred thoughts of a student. The majestic alma mater that dazzles before the eyes still holds a lot to ruminate and derive pleasure out of those flashbacks.

Ravenshaw, the name itself is iconic. Identifying someone with an alumnus of Ravenshaw College (now University), that drives the inner instinct to hold the head high always. Makers of Odisha are deep-rooted to this temple of learning. One hundred years of this elite department of English has passed leaving its products to gaze at this mammoth structure with amazement and with a sense of pride.

Going 45 years back to collect the loose-ends poses to be a bit tire-some and hazy. But, by all means, it is a lucrative platform to dwell-upon some unforgettable memories of our P.G. times from 1974-76.

The Canvas of remembrance is so vast. Hence, I would like to recount only a few impressive episodes which my friends may share with love and treat them as adorable facts, not fiction.

During my 5th year, I was unanimously chosen as the Secretary of the English Association / Seminar. The josh at that time was over flowing which propelled me and some of my close friends like Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty (Convener of the Centenary Committee) Dr. Satyabrata Das, Dr. Hadibandhu Satpathy, Dr. Santa Prakash Patra, Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra, Dr. Kamala Prasad Mohapatra (all retired Principals/Professors of English) Sri Tapan Kumar Palit, noted business person and some other enthusiastic friends from young ladies group like Ms. Rasmi Mishra, Ms. Sweta Pattnaik, Late Banashree Ray Choudhury, Ms. Someeta Kundu, Ms. Sunanda Padhi etc. to do something more tangible and eye-catching for the Department.

To begin with, we introduced a weekly wall magazine under the title of PHOENIX which still continues as I learnt and felt so happy about. That show-cased the creative talent of the students from both P.G. and UG classes and the members of the faculty as well.

One library adorning the literary works of world's geniuses was made functional inside the room attached to the then 6th year class room. This served as a regular meeting point of our friends over a cup of tea / coffee as a routine matter.

Exchange of creative ideas, analysis of different works of literary giants with discussions on the contemporary topics served as a gainful pastime for all the students. This place was a preferred destination where students used to come to unwind themselves from the monotony and exhausting chain of classes and get indulged in several productive discussions.

Episode-1. Translation as Special Paper:

During 6th year, we found that the Department was not allowing translation as a special paper for the last couple of years. Accompanied by some friends approached the then Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, a Gandhian in true-spirit and a repository of erudition, to allow translation as a special paper like American Literature, Linguistics, Indo-Anglian Literature etc. for the interested students. But our appeal was promptly turned down. On close inquiry, we learnt that during the past years some translation papers were not up to mark for which Department received some unkind remarks. But on our insistence, Prof. Dash, after having consultation with his senior colleagues, agreed to conduct a test to short list a few eligible students to offer translation project as special paper. So, in a hot summer afternoon, a test was held where a long Odia paragraph was given to translate into English within a very short time. I clearly remember, there was one Odia word "Anindya Sundari" in the given paragraph (a tribute to the most beautiful girl). While translating this word into English, I wrote 'pulchritudinous' as the most appropriate English expression for "Anindya Sundari". Like this, some more words I used as English alternatives those were not popularly used in common parlance. Test papers were examined and some of us were found to be eligible to opt for Translation as their special paper. But my use of English words was considered bombastic and pompous. I clearly recall, a stupendous volume of Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary was specially requisitioned from the newly opened special U.G.C. reading room to ascertain the exact use of the English words I used in translation. Sri Paresh Ch. Rout, the then senior most reader of the department, who was watching the developments came to my rescue and offered himself to act as the guide for my translation project and I was advised to take up English translation of some selected classic short stories of Late Kalindi Charan Panigrahi. But it was such a time-consuming exercise that warranted meticulous involvement to get the exact meaning of those long and complex Odia sentences. I picked up six long stories of this celebrated author,

translated them assiduously and submitted with a substantial write up on its historical perspective (the Sabuja Juga) highlighting elaborately the vision and style of the author in strict compliance with English literature.

Episode-2. Secretary of the English Department:

As mentioned earlier, I was the Secretary of the English Association/Seminar of the Department. We had some ambitious plans to embark upon various vibrant activities aimed at glorifying the Department. Once we contemplated something big and I was asked by my friends to apprise to the then 6th year students of this immediately for their approval. It was about 3.00 pm. May be it was not an opportune time, since I entered the 6th year class room when Professor Sarbeswar Dash was teaching. When Prof. Dash teaches, his flawless fluency could only match a supersonic jet. Any deviation/ break in the middle would drive him crazy. I humbly sought permission of Prof. Dash in the midst of his lecture to allow me to speak to the 6th year students' only for two minutes. And after addressing the 6th year students for only a minute or so, left the hall without any further interruption in the teaching of Prof. Dash. But little did I know that my action would trigger a storm beyond my comprehension. Prof. Dash considered my entry into the 6th year class in the midst of his lecture as a serious offence, and a deliberate act meant to belittle him. After that s incident, he stopped coming to the Department from the very next Day. On the third day, to everybody's consternation, he sent his resignation. I felt as if all hell broke loose on my head. But all faculty members were very supportive of me as they knew my intentions were honest and aimed at doing some good job. Senior faculty members like Sri D. K. Roy, Sri Paresh Rout, Md. Fakhruddin, Md. Qamuruddin, Sri Satya Shankar Mishra, Sri Bibhsu Prasad Padhy, Sri B. C. Dash, Sri Trilok Das and Sri Chinmoy Jena tried to convince Prof. Dash about my innocuous intention in entering 6th year class room in his presence but he was hardly pacified. I got afflicted with my mental trauma seeing those unsavoury developments in the Department. I proposed to quit the Department and seek admission somewhere on transfer as Prof. Dash consistently stuck to his gun and continually turned down all our apologies and supplications made by us and our faculty members as well. No sight was visible to tide over this impasse. With a very heavy heart I was offering my silent prayers to rescue me from this imbroglio. The next day, to my pleasant surprise, I was summoned by Prof. Dash to his room in the department. With surging palpitations in my heart, I stumbled into his room where all members of faculty were present with their grim faces, but I could notice they were trying hard to conceal their smiles. All my apprehensions and forebodings started to fade away slowly. Prof. Dash himself left his

chair, came close to me and fed me with some sweets. I could not believe such a change. It was nothing short of a miracle which was rather amusing and reassuring. While I came out of the room, my friends who were waiting outside with bated breath eagerly asked what had happened. Since I was not very sure about this changed scenario, I looked up to Sri D.K. Roy, the then Reader and our mentor who had come outside with me. He took all of us to an adjacent room and narrated the stream of events behind this high drama and such sudden 'U' turn of events. That we had all seen a large portrait of his deceased mother hung on the wall of his drawing room. Perhaps sensing that there might be some truth in his colleagues' words about my innocence, he made a planchet call to his mother on the previous night. And her mother revealed to him about my honest and innocuous gestures and confirmed my unwavering respect for him. There should have been no reason to misunderstand neither me nor my actions. Then his mind changed and the situation took a dramatic turn reestablishing our unwavering bond and rapport with all the members of the faculty in a more meaningful way. This incident continues to remain fulgent in my memory to be erased with my death only.

Episode 3. Narration of this hilarious episode may sound trivial but one will be enthused to listen:

Once Sri Chinmoy Jena, one of our most beloved teachers, whom we fondly called 'Chinu Bhai' was teaching us the great poem of Eliot *The Waste Land* with all seriousness. Some of us occupying middle seats were not very attentive for some reasons or other. Even some friends from the front and back benches were chiding me provoking my response in subdued tones. But this continuous gossip amongst us impacted the otherwise quiet study atmosphere of the class. Sri Jena who was observing distractions in the midst of his teachings was visibly annoyed. Suddenly he signalled me to stand up and to explain what he was teaching. I was just flabbergasted and cut a very sorry figure while standing helplessly without having any certain answer to his question. To my dismay, my friends from both gents and ladies benches also joined Chinu Bhai (Sri Jena) demanding answer from me. I was at a loss to meet the staring and chiding eyes from all sides of the class. Suddenly a I came forth with, what I should say, a bright repartee. I spoke with confidence in a bit louder voice, "Sir, we know 'a good poetry always appeals before it is understood'. That's what happened with me and without understanding your teachings, we were enjoying the tenor of this great literary creation having a tremendous appeal on us which led to whispering among ourselves about this literary marvel."

Suddenly my reply silenced the whole class as all eyes were fixed on Chinu Bhai for his response. Then he looked at all of us with reddened eyes and left the class room in a huff. Of course, it never had any adverse effect in our affinity.

So many nostalgic memories still haunt me but with a deep sense of satisfaction and bliss.

Tennyson's immortal composition *The Brook* and its lines... "But I go on for ever" appropriately sings for the unending voyage of the English Department of Ravenshaw which stands firmly as an undiminished tall light post in the educational high seas of the world. I am proud to bow down with utmost reverence before this ever-inspiring citadel of wisdom that flaunts its glory as the central gem of a diamond-studded necklace encompassing other effulgent P.G. and U.G. Departments of the present Ravenshaw University.

With malice towards none but with unstinted love for one and all including the old veterans, the present stalwarts and the gen-next who are the torch-bearers in hoisting the glorious flag of Ravenshaw at an enviable height in general and the English Department in particular across the globe, do take leave here.

I wish the New Year to be a harbinger of good–luck, prosperity and happiness for all of us and pray Lord Jagannath to drive away the macabre dance of the current pandemic from the world and bring out unfettered and unaffected smiles on all faces.

My love and regards to all connected with this centenary celebration.

[Mr. Kishore Kumar Mohanty joined State Civil Service (O.A.S.) and superannuated as the Special Secretary to the Government of Odisha. He is a regular writer in periodicals and continues to be the co-editor of monthly noted magazine *Samaroha*.]

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Ravenshaw College: Harbinger of Renaissance in Odisha

Dr. Kamala Prasad Mohapatra
M.A.:1974-76

The growth and prosperity, the integral development of the state of Odisha in social, cultural, intellectual, economic, political, scientific and technological spheres, the ebb and flow of life as a whole directly or indirectly owe their origin and indebtedness to this sacred academic pantheon, the famous Ravenshaw College, Cuttack to lead kindly light and guide the long underdeveloped state, escort as a prop from pervading gloom to effulgent illumination, from dark contours to dazzling portals.

A careful perusal of history in the global perspective reveals that every alumnus usually owes gratitude to his alma mater, the etymological meaning of which is nourishing mother. As human beings, our position is next to God in the Biblical "Great Chain of Being" because human beings are endowed with power of judgment to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, virtue and vice. No wonder, the alma mater always keeps the hand of blessings on the alumnus to mentor him to acquire a meaningful image.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the university of Bologna of Italy established by a few students in 1088 is considered to be the oldest university of the world and its emblem reads "alma mater studiorum" which means "nourishing mother of studies". Since then the term alma mater has become the favourite term and served as an inexplicable link between the student and the institution, reminding of E. M. Forster's unique coinage "only connect".

The alma mater undoubtedly feels proud to only connect with the growth, flourish of the Alumni. Ravenshaw College subsequently graduating to a unitary university unlike other institutions has carved out a niche for itself and stood on the towering pedestal of successes, glory and accomplishment.

I think I shall fail in my duty and fail to do justice to my write up on Ravenshaw College vis-a-vis me as an alumnus and a faculty, if I do not share my experience.

In one of the conferences a friend from Delhi asked me if I had studied in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. I was taken by surprise by his telepathic preemption and

acerbic assertion. I simply looked at him with wide eyed wonder and began to feel proud of the incredibly awesome stature of my alma mater.

He nudged me and said "What happened? Where are you lost? Come on! What is there to be so very sentimental about it? Look dear! It is an obvious feeling. If you are from Bengal, you must have been an alumnus of Presidency College, Calcutta, if you are from Delhi, you must have been an alumnus of Zakir Husain College, Delhi, similarly you belong to Odisha, so I unhesitatingly surmised that you must have been an alumnus of the great Ravenshaw College." He further added that he has a couple of Odia friends who used to publicly regret for not being so fortunate to be the alumni of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

The aroma of Ravenshaw ambience is utterly different, the imposing Redbrick, state of the art structure containing vignettes of colonial architecture yet speaking in loud and clear voice about the magnanimity and commitment of the Commissioner of colonial regime T. E. Ravenshaw. The scenic backdrop, the sublime aura, the serene atmosphere, competitive spirit, Kanika Library Reading rooms, Seminars, Debates, Symposia, Picnic, love in lawn that makes you forlorn, its illusion, mischief in hostels during vacation - all contribute in a big way to tickle my nostalgia and retrieve my youthful resilience.

It would be unfair to consider Ravenshaw College as an ordinary, run of the mill academic pantheon. Unless we make a close survey to make an estimate of the outstanding and fabulous contributions that Ravenshaw has made to enrich the social, political, financial, cultural, intellectual and national arena of Odisha, objective assessment of its worth is not possible.

A brief account of the historical background of this pantheon shall help us know it better. The hoary history of Ravenshaw speaks in loud, clear voice the historical perspective and socio cultural, political scenario of Odisha. History of Ravenshaw may be viewed as synonymous with the history of Odisha during colonial regime and even thereafter up to the present times.

The then Commissioner of Odisha division, Thomas Edward Ravenshaw was stunned to see the deplorable condition of Education in Odisha. Of course, much before T. E. Revanshaw's posting as Commissioner, T. B. Macaulay, Chairman of Public Instruction Committee had submitted his "Minute" to British Government in 1835 which turned out to be a boon for the promotion and proliferation of English language in India.

Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian Languages were taught during that period. Macautay's "Minute" made a strong plea for teaching English language to the Indians. There was of course initial protest against English language in India but later on the intelligentsia realized the significance of English language, that in the long run helped India prove its credibility with its vast potential and earned huge recognition and immense respect across the globe.

Thomas Babington Macaulay's recommendations in English Education Act (Minute) 1835 besides introduction of English language in Indian Education system made a scathing attack on the inferiority of native teaching learning pattern. He argued that western learning was superior and it could only be taught through the medium of English. There was therefore a need to produce by English Language Higher Education- "a Class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" who could in their turn develop the tools to transmit western learning in the vernacular languages of India.

Macaulay also suggested to reduce funding to traditional education in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and instead the funds should be diverted for western subjects with English as the language of instruction. The then Governor General of India William Bentinck agreed to implement the proposals mentioned in the "Minute" and since then serious efforts were made to teach English to the Indians.

After English language and teaching through English language received more importance than that of traditional oriental education, "Woods Despatch" was introduced by Charles Wood, the president of the Board of Control of the East India Company in 1854. This "Wood's Despatch" is called Magnacarta of Indian education and it is universally considered as a milestone to usher in an era of progress in the hither to most neglected and gloomy arena of education in India during colonial regime. "Woods Despatch" professed the promotion of western education in India. "Woods Despatch" was accepted by Governor General Lord Dalhousie and he took steps to implement it.

In accordance with "Woods Despatch", education Departments were established in every province and universities were opened at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 on the model of London University. At least one Government School was opened in every district. Affiliated private schools were given grant-in-aid. Indian natives were given training in their mother tongue.

A casual glimpse into the historical background of erstwhile Ravenshaw College and present Ravenshaw University unfolds the saga of struggle steeped with challenges.

Odisha in those days was under Bengal presidency and independent state status was denied to it.

The great famine of 1866 created an upsurge, an awareness among the people of Odisha for self-esteem and such awareness was further fortified when Thomas Edward Ravenshaw joined as the Commissioner of Odisha division. T. E. Ravenshaw made a fervent plea with the Bengal Government that the students from Odisha are facing great problems to receive education as the poor and lower middle-class parents could not afford to send their children to Calcutta. He also succeeded in getting permission to start the first college in Odisha in Cuttack Zilla School in January 1868. It graduated to a full-fledged Government Degree College bearing the name Cuttack College in 1876.

With the administrative support of T. E. Ravenshaw and financial support of Maharaja of Mayurbhanj Sri Krushna Chandra Bhanjadeo, the college was affiliated to Calcutta University and on the insistence of the Maharaja Sri Bhanjadeo, the College was named Ravenshaw College to commemorate the substantial contribution of the Commissioner TE Ravenshaw to the growth of education in Odisha.

Later on Ravenshaw College was affiliated to Patna University and it was shifted to the present campus containing a sprawling area of 87.4 acres of land at Chakkar Padia in 1921.

While laying the foundation stone of the present Building in November 1919, Sir Edward Gait, the then Governor of Bihar and Odisha wished that this mighty monument would grow into a university and his wish proved to be prophetic. In November 2006 Ravenshaw College was declared a unitary university by Government of Odisha.

Post Graduate Department of English was opened in 1922 with the generous help of Sonepur Queen Smt. Pravati Devi. She donated in those times a hefty sum of Rs.1,71,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Seventy One thousand Five Hundred only) which in present times, if converted may be more than around Ten Crore rupees.

Post graduate Department of English began to function in full swing since its opening in 1922. Under Graduate Department in English was already there since 1916 and catering to the ever growing needs of the students of Odisha state. The opening of Post Graduate Department of English was indeed a landmark in the golden annals of history of Odisha. After the department functioned in full swing, the students of Odisha did not feel the necessity or compulsion rather to go to Calcutta for higher studies, which was an expensive proposition.

Very few meritorious students cherishing the ambition of acquiring Post Graduate degree could afford to study in Calcutta University. However, Ravenshaw College, especially the post graduate department of English not only remained in great demand but also its brilliant, illustrious and renowned professors like Prof. P. S. Sundaram, Prof. A. P. O'Brien, Prof P. K. Pati, Prof. Sabeswar Das and other erudite faculties guided and mentored the students to inculcate down-to-earth attitude. The eminent faculties along with teaching of academic curricula, used to imbibe human values which in the long run help them to stand in good stead.

It will not be out of context to cite the views of Harold Nicolson, who said the highest academic degree does not make one an educated person. An educated person needs to inculcate higher human values. The state of Odisha groping in the darkness, looking for its identity being overshadowed by the towering dimension of Bengal and Bihar, lacking in royal or colonial patronage and crushed under the cataclysmic influence of the great famine of 1866 experienced a long awaited breather and found a beacon in Ravenshaw College in general and P.G. Department of English in particular.

Ravenshaw College subscribed in a big way to the recommendations of T.B. Macaulay's "Minute" of 1835 and Charles Wood's "Wood's Despatch" of 1854 for teaching of English language and literature to the Indians. Eminent Statesmen, Social reformers, freedom fighters, writers such as Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Madhusudan Das, Godabarish Mishra, Pandit Nilakantha Dash, Biju Pattnaik, Rabi Ray, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Naba Krushna Choudhury, Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Dr. Prana Krushna Parija, Nandini Satapathy, J. B. Patnaik, Chitamani Panigrahi and many others proved to be the worthy alumni of this legendary academic pantheon, as for a pretty long period of time it was the only institution to impart Higher Education in Odisha.

Apart from academic pursuits, Ravenshaw College became the hub and haven for freedom movement. Hordes of Ravenshawvians joined Gandhiji's Non-cooperation movement and Quit India movement, leaving behind their studies.

The proposal for carving out the separate state of Odisha on the basis of language also got crystallized in the hallowed portals of Ravenshaw College. Despite severe opposition from Bengal, especially from Sri Kanti Bhattacharya testifying before the commission that "Odia Ekta Swatantra Bhasa Noyen" (Odia is not a separate language), the sincere efforts and exemplary commitment of Sri Gopabandhu Dash, Sri Madhusudan Das and Gajapati Krushna Chandra Dev came into fruition and Odisha became a separate

state on the basis of Language on 1st April 1936, although a few Odia speaking patches like Manjusha, Tekali in the south, Midnapur, Kanthi in the north and Sadeikala and Kharasuan in the east could not be annexed to Odisha due to the deep-rooted conspiracy of some central leaders.

So, it is hardly any exaggeration to state that if Ravenshaw College were not established at the personal initiative of the academic messiah T. E. Ravenshaw, the educational advancement and cultural effervescence of Odisha would have been a distant dream. Hence there is absolute justification to look upon and deify Ravenshaw College as the precursor of Renaissance in Odisha, which over the years since its inception has been making untiring efforts to provide innovative, integral and holistic education not only to the students of Odisha but also to the students of neighbouring states.

On the auspicious occasion of centenary celebration of P.G. Department of English, I as a proud alumnus and former faculty convey my good wishes and believe that the noble efforts of the illustrious alumni shall go a long way to enrich the unsullied reputation of Ravenshaw and pave the way to carve out a niche for itself at the international arena on par with Stanford, John Hopkins, Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

[Dr. Kamala Prasad Mahapatra superannuated as the Regional Director of Education, Bhubaneswar. He is an erudite academician who has written several books. Dr. Mahapatra is also a Translator, Critic, TV Panellist, Pulpit Orator, Columnist, Research Supervisor, Positive Thinker, Counsellor & Social Activist.]

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Time of our Lives

Prof. Aloke Banerjee
B.A.: 1972-74, M.A.: 1974-76

Just fresh from Stewart School to Ravenshaw College 1st year! I was so conscious in college, looking out for familiar faces amidst a vast crowd of students. It was a sea – change from the regulated, quiet movements in school to the vast multitude of knowledge-seekers, most of them garrulous, shouting out whatever thought wafted through the mind – good, bad and ugly. Very soon I had my own group of friends and the journey started.

The professors were an interesting lot. Some preferred to admire the cumulus clouds over Cuttack while being greeted, others gave a plaintive, condescending smile of disapproval, like the way you smile at the cutest monkey in the zoo before moving on. Some of them walked with a swagger, radiating confidence, (later I learnt that was to impress us, gaping youngsters) Others were quite leisurely. They were (are) a much revered lot. We saw the transformation in the class where they would teach effectively and they tried hard to keep the class in good humour. Boys sat in front of the podium while the girls occupied the left and right benches. While lecturing the professors had to look straight and then turn left and right, giving our tired, hungry eyes the illusion of three-headed Lord Brahma. Some romantically inclined boys would sneak a camouflaged, furtive glance at the girls. This had a devastating effect.

"Stand up," shouted the hurt professor, "explain what I just told the class!" Our Romeo, looking trapped would cast a comatose look, for even though he was 'no dumber than an ox' was equally huge, generating little islands of stifled laughter. The professor would mutter something about fourteen generations and farming before resuming the lecture.

The lady professors were very affable and warm but outside the class. Once, heading a class, most of them, to our utter surprise and dismay would put on a rather stern visage bolstered by an 'edge' in the voice. Perhaps the very sight of us - bumbling, shuffling youngsters - put them off. Yet, they would teach in an excellent, informal manner and the initial bitterness would wane off. They never liked being questioned in the class and no one asked any, even though several haunted the mind. Many a times,

for us restless chaps, there was no co-ordination between the sight and the sound – the voice having an extra – terrestrial effect, while the perfume that wafted around would bring a 'drowsy numbness.' At times, we sympathised and thought of the myriad problems they must be facing - husband, mother-in-law, children, school, kitchen....

From the history class we would head straight for the economics class which further added to the confusion: Adam Smith the historian got mixed up with Kettle by the economist! We started bunking the economics class but waited for the class attendance. The moment Madam turned towards the blackboard, we would jump out on the corridor through the window on our left. The hostelites were strictly instructed to immediately glide to our vacant seats. After some weeks, as we smoothly and silently eased ourselves from the window and were sprinting down the corridor, we braked so hard that we almost skidded. Standing in his impeccable white suit with the posture of a confident goalkeeper was the Principal – an eminent scientist (as we were given to understand), a man of uncertain temperament who believed in the doctrine of Impatience. He sternly signalled us to stand on one side and waited and waited, much to our growing consternation and uneasiness. Inspired by us, more boys had started jumping- they too sprinted, braked and fell in line - defeat writ large all over their shiny countenance. The Principal squinted at us with utter disgust. "Come to my office," were the only words he spoke and left. We the Stewart School types, glared at the cringing hostelites for letting us down. The long, sullen procession started for the Principals office which was far away at the other end of the campus. Sprawled on the lawns of the Kanika Library were several students, most of them hostelites. We had learnt by then, that most of the hostelites were perpetually short of money and waited desperately for money orders from home. One of them was Bhagi who was as poor as a Church mouse, being the proud possessor of one trouser, one shirt, one baniyan, one (that's right). This penurious existence plus some expensive traits like cigarettes and cinema, Brylcreem and Old Spice, propelled them to apply for any or all types of scholarships in college. "Brothers, where are you going?" some of them enquired with curious and eager eyes. "Principal's office, scholarship" was our curt reply. They were the ones who reached the office while we slipped away with a backward march. The Principal who was busy signing files, made them stand against the wall, put the pen in his pocket and yelled. "Last warning, Out after this!" He glared at the utterly confused eyes. "Sir, scholarship?" bleated a timid lamb. "Get Out," roared the Principal. We never bunked again.

Paying attention in class, delving into books opened a new world. We scored well in the class tests – much to the surprise of many including girls. In those days, girls

kept to themselves, moving around in groups clutching the books close to their chin. They always gave the impression of an amalgamation of caution and self – consciousness. The only place where they would sing to their hearts content was the Girls Common Room, which gave the impression and illusion of an aviary. This room was perilously close to the window of the Principal's office and the cacophony at times would infuriate the Principal.

Among scores of incidents during our Hons days, two things stand out. It was the morning of the Holi during early 70s. I with dear friend Gopa, we decided to visit the residences of our teachers to apply colour on their feet and seek blessings. We took out our bicycles and set forth on this noble venture and finally reached Prof Sarbeswar Dash. There had been some 20 students already there and we all sat on long veranda and in a warm cordial atmosphere we were treated to the tastiest puri - halwa and paneer curry. Sir was serving the dishes himself very affectionately. I was amazed at this loving attitude of a great teacher.

One rainy afternoon I went to meet Prof. D. K. Ray at his residence at Mahatab Road. I rang the bell and, after a few minutes, Sir opened the door. He looked ruffled and apologetic and said, rather ruefully, that he overslept and that he missed his I.A.S. coaching class at Ravenshaw.

I said, "Sir, so it was a costly sleep. You missed a precious class."

And Sir replied, "Yes, it was a costly sleep. I missed my class", and after a few seconds added with a smile, "and my remuneration too." It was a meagre amount of Rs. 25/- only. But that gentle humour of Prof. Ray has registered in my mind.

As I grew, a sort of transformation started setting within me and I realized that college was indeed for knowledge. Gone were the 'ridiculous boldness' of the earlier days. I took literature seriously and started perusing several books, even books outside the syllabus. New worlds, new horizons, new sensitive delicate feelings, the transience of life and love, the "still, sad music of humanity." The passionate loafer 'had arrived. I interacted with my professors and many a times we walked the talk to the shade of the sprawling tree near their quarters. Visits to the library became frequent and the hours spent there lengthened- the ideals imbibed peeping though the broken prism of life, made me marvel at the length to which the mind can venture. Our revered professors worked their magic along with the poets, novelists and essayists and critics – the web of the mind at times tangled, at times clear and soothing like the dawn in spring. Home became a place to dine and sleep and also study, at times late into the night watching

the moon sink in the west. I was obsessed and at times tormented by Albert Camus, Thomas Hardy and Jiddu Krishnamurti. Salvation for me was at the top floor of the Commerce Block – the Department of English. Ah! The corridors of maturity, the classrooms with steel blue doors and windows – the delicacy of the permanence of love in the 'Grecian Urn' to the intricacy and destructive power of love in *The Great Gatsby*. The portraits of poets and moralists, several centuries old suddenly appeared close and intimate, the pain in their eyes, a reflection of their troubled lives and convictions. In such a muddled state of affairs it was but natural for me to confess my love to the pair of eyes that haunted me for some time. That thrill of rising in love was most exhilarating and continues even now for the love of my life, my dearest wife Keka.

Forty long years later, I re-visited my college during a summer break. The road below the Commerce Block was quiet and deserted giving the impression of an action-packed still photograph with muted voices and fading faces. I gazed at the quarters where my favourite teachers once resided. A gust of noon time summer breeze blew the dry leaves all over my face – "yellow and black and pale and hectic red" – with subdued, lingering affection. I looked up. It was the same tree under whose shade my teachers counselled, consoled, encouraged and guided me. Be happy, wherever you are, my Gods. Like all mortals "a heavy weight of hours has chained me. I fall upon the thorns of life" but I do not bleed anymore.

[Prof. Aloke Banerjee was appointed as the C.G.O. Gp. (A), Ministry of Defence and posted to Department of English, National Defence Academy, Pune where he worked from1984-2013. He is the recipient of the prestigious Chief of Integrated Staff Committee Medal along with several awards and citations for meritorious services.]

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Reminiscing Ravenshaw

Dr. Snehaprava Das
B.A.:1972-74, M.A.: 1975-76

In the words of Kevin Arnold 'Memory is a way of holding on to things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose!'

How I hold on to the good old days of the mid-seventies! My days in the Department of English of Ravenshaw College, and how desperately I wish that they should never have been a memory!

Sometimes I wonder if Ravenshaw College is just a muted memory for me. Ravenshaw lives in my blood like a living organism as it does in the blood of many Ravenshawvians, settled stubborn, determined not to leave till the time they are due to leave.

Ravenshaw college is my alma mater. I never studied in any other college except Ravenshaw. I had entered Ravenshaw in 1970 as a student of science. I spent more than six years in Ravenshaw college. The first two years, however, passed in struggling with the tough routine of attending the theory and practical classes, the heavy course and the English medium of teaching. I stayed in the hostel and in my initial days there I missed my home a lot. In the next year, however, things gradually got streamlined and I liked the hostel life. After completing 'Intermediate Science' I stayed with my parents in our own home at Station Bazar.

I had decided to change to arts stream and to take English as my honours subject. My parents and my elder brothers and sister were not in favour of taking English as an Hons. subject. As such the compulsory English course was too hard to handle, they said. And English as an Honours subject would prove to be too difficult to cope with. Despite all their dissuasive reasonings I remained firm on my decision and appeared in the Hons. selection examination. I was lucky and got selected. Only when I became a student of English literature, I came to know my college more closely and understand the spirit of Ravenshaw and what magical charm it casts on its students. That is why perhaps the fond memories of the years when I was a student of English Honours and English P.G. remain unfadingly painted on the canvas of my mind.

Our department is located on the top floor of the Commerce Block which is somehow cut-off from the massive structure in brick red that is the main building. The two pictures that remain permanently etched in my memory were the glass case on the wall to the right of the landing displaying the hand written articles in the wall magazine *Phoenix*, and the movable blackboard on the left mentioning the name of teachers under the heading 'Teachers on Leave' on a given day. At this point I must confess that my orientation days in the department as a student of English Hons were not very exciting. I have already mentioned that I was a student of Science and changed to the Arts stream after completing my Pre-University and First year Science. Despite my fascination towards English Literature I was feeling quite unsure about coping with the new course. I think most of my classmates studying English honours felt the same way. We were awed by the very aura of glamour the smartly dressed teachers exuded as they brisked into the class room

They would greet us briefly and then turning their back to us would start writing on the blackboard. I looked vaguely at the list of the titles written below the boldly underlined word 'Bibliography'. I remember I had to consult the dictionary to find out the meaning of the word. I also remember asking one of my friends if we would have to read all those books, and my friend replying 'I suppose so,' sounding even more perplexed. Invariably all the teachers advised us to study the history of English Literature thoroughly and extensively and gave us a long list of the texts. That was the time when I secretly began to wonder if my decision to make a switch over to Arts and particularly choosing English as an honours subject was right. Now I can not remember the name but I will remain permanently grateful to the teacher who advised us to start with B.I. for Evans's History of English Literature and English Drama. That made the mission look a bit easier and accomplishable.

But soon this feeling of uncertainty brought in by the desperate efforts to grapple with our confusions began to wane as we were gradually guided into the magic land of English literature by our experienced and knowledgeable teachers. When I say 'knowledgeable' and 'great' teachers the first name that comes to my mind was that of our revered Prof. Sarbeswar Das. Prof. Das and the English department seemed to share almost a symbiotic relationship. During the mid-seventies it was difficult to think of the department without Prof. Das. The sight of the saintly figure in spotless white and with a mop of wavy hair wearing a genial smile helped a lot to assuage our fear and confusion.

Then Prof. Nrusingha Charan Rath started *Eve of St. Agnes* and the Keatsian mood of romance swept over us. Then followed Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley,

Dryden, Pope and others unfolding world after world of wonder and amazement. Attending Sujit Mohanty Sir's class was a unique experience for me. He taught us *Desire Under the Elms*. I still marvelled at the way he explained to us the play which was an intriguing blend of the Greek myth of Phaedra Hippolytus and Theseus and an exploring of the intricate patterns of human behaviour. It was through *Desire Under the Elms* and *Mourning becomes Electra* that I was introduced to the mesmerizing world of '20th century American plays' which worked upon the concept of 'looking inward', the complex working of human mind and the split personality, the Jungian theory of collective unconscious and many such interesting aspects of psychology. Modern American Psycho-analytical plays still remain one of the most interesting and most loved subjects for me.

But it was during my Post Graduation years that the bonding with the department became strong and acquired a new dimension. It inspired in me a sense of belonging, gave me an identity that made me feel dignified and special. The uncertainty and the skepticism of the Hons. days were replaced with pride and confidence. I was completely caught in the spell of English Literature and the spell has not lifted ever since. Given the choice I could go on and on and write pages on my memory of my department. But I would better try to make it as brief as possible and confine my reminiscences to a few of my esteemed and adored teachers.

I have already mentioned Prof. Sarbeswar Das. During my honours days the interaction with sir was brief. I remember Sir taking extra classes on Sundays to teach us 'Rhetoric and Prosody' and Scansion. I just could make a guess what a vast storehouse of knowledge Sir was when he taught us *Four Quartets*. We just stared at him unblinkingly as words came cascading down from his mouth, elaborating upon the various interpretations, explaining to us the baffling concept of time, the influence of the *Bhagavad Gita* on T. S. Eliot's poem and several such things. I have no compunction to admit now that at that age most of the thing Sir said went past over my head. But I kept my pen scratching the pages of my notebook nonstop taking down notes. And that helped a lot. Prof. Das knew each one of us personally. I had written a paper on Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and given it to Sir before presenting it in a seminar. Sir had corrected it and written down his remarks. I still treasure the paper as a precious memento.

Prof. D. K. Ray, taught us Donne's poetry with a meticulously worked out 'one poem in one class' programme. A student could write a substantiative answer just by referring to the class notes of D. K. Ray Sir. Miss one class of Prof. Ray and you miss a

poem. There was never a repeat class. I and a few of my friends had bunked one class of D. K. R. Sir to watch a movie and later learnt that he had completed "The Flea" in that class. the poem was never taught again. I still regret the mistake of missing the class.

Our classes started at 11 am and got over at 3 pm. I and some of my friends used to go to the premises of the Ladies' Hostel in the half an hour break to eat *panipuri.* We gathered around the trolley of the *panipuri* vendor gulping down one after another crispy *panipuri* stuffed with spiced massed potato and dipped in seasoned tamarind water. And suddenly the sonorous voice of Prof. Paresh Rout (he taught *Tom Jones*) came drifting in through the windows of CB 28 and we rushed to the class. Prof. Rout would give us a clipped smile and wave his hand motioning us to enter. Then there was Prof. Jeetu Patnaik, Prof. Satya Sankar Mishra, Prof B. J. B. Mahapatra teaching us *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Edward II*, and the essays of Bacon. But we greatly enjoyed Prof. Raghunath Panda's class on Milton. He used to pronounce Beelzebub in a funny way and I and my friends waited for Sir to take the name of Satan's second-in -command. Then there was the classes of Bibhu Padhi Sir (Osborne's Look Back in Anger) and Chinmoy Jena Sir (*Waiting for Godot* and *The Glass Menagerie*). Chinmoy Jena Sir (fondly addressed as Chinu Bhai by the boys) would strut into the class, take his stand behind the table on the dais and take out a bunch of cards. He would be writing on the blackboard and explaining at the same time Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus, Existentialism and the Theatre of the Absurd consulting his cards from time to time. I still cherish the running notes though the pages which have been yellowed with the passage of time.

Yes, the passage of time has yellowed the pages of the notebook but the memory of Ravenshaw and the Department of English is still green and fresh and will remain so till the end. How I wish I could just rewind back to the old days and press a pause, just for a little while. And how right is Cassandra Clare while saying, 'There are memories that time does not erase. Forever does not make loss forgettable, only bearable'. When I had entered the college in the year 1970 I had never thought that the college would enter me and would remain in me timelessly. It is not a memoir I am writing. I am writing about the days that had made me what I am today. I am writing a 'nostalgia'.

[Dr. Snehaprava Das has translated 15 Odia texts (novels, poetry, short stories and nonfiction) in English. She has five collections of English poems to her credit. She has received the Prabashi Bhasha Sahitya Sammama, Fakirmohan Anubad Sammana and Jibanananda Das award for translation.]

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My Honours Days

Mr. Trinath Prasad Tripathy
B.A.: 1972-74

I became a Ravenshawvian in 1970 when I got admission into P,U,SC class. After two years of science study, a change in direction was inevitable as my mathematical ability was cruelly challenged for the first time by solid geometry. I was undecided about my future course of study. I had already quit my school day dream of joining engineering course at Rourkela as the prospect of engineering graduates was is not so bright at that time. At this juncture, the late Alekh Chandra Tripathy who was doing his P.G. in English inspired me to choose English honours without a second thought. Thus, I belonged to the English department of Ravenshaw College. Some of my friends in science also enrolled themselves into English Honours.

More than 45 years have passed since I left Ravenshaw and memories have become blank over the years yet I couldn't visualise many golden moments of my honours days. Our department was in the newly built Commerce Block overlooking the lush green College playground where many state-level cricket tournaments were being held besides the annual athletic meets of the college and the four hostels existing at that time. Bishnu Chandra Khatua, two years senior to me and Krushna Bal, one year senior to me respectively, my co-boarders in East hostel made the department proud when they got into I.A.S. and Allied Services.

Prof. Sarbeswar Das, a staunch follower of Gandhian idealism was the Head of the Department at that time. I remember how he moved from one hostel to the other to meet honours students and encourage them on the annual examination. He also took extra pain to finish some of the unfinished courses. One cannot forget Prof. D. K. Ray enter in the classroom with a bundle of books in one hand and trying to clear out doubts in metaphysical poetry. Prof. Nrusingh Rath, a poet himself, taught us romantic poetry. Ranji cricketer and fine singer Prof. Sujit Mohanty impressed us which his eloquent teaching of *Desire under the Elms*. Prof. Samant, engrossed in his own world, through missiles of hyperboles at us, least bothering if we could ever comprehend them. A few teachers however were never serious about teaching.

Many of my classmates at Ravenshaw English department like Satya, Haribandhu, Mrutunjaya (Jena and Mohanty), Shanta, Prakash, Venu, Gopa, Bijaya, Sneha, Krishna and Manorama etc., have retired as principals from different colleges of the state. In leisure hours in our retired lives, we remember our honours days and our good friends.

Our destined time will take us to the other world one after another and all will merge in five basic elements one day but this department will continue to exist for many more years and cater to the academic needs of thousands of aspiring young people and nourish their career. I bow down before my department with high esteem. At the end, I thank the members of the organising committee especially Anshuman Babu for giving me this rare opportunity to express my experiences and association with the Department of English, Ravenshaw University.

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From Learning to Teaching to Administration, Ravenshaw, My Alma Mater, I Owe to You All!

Dr. Sumitra Mishra
B.A.: 1973-75, M.A.: 1975-77
Teacher: 1992-2010

Yes, that's what I feel in the core of my heart. From learning to teaching to administration, everything did I learn here, in the incredible educative environment of my dear Alma Mater, Ravenshaw College, specifically the glorious Department of English!! I am what I am, or who I am because of her inspiring culture which taught me to go forth and explore. I do not have words enough to pay a worthy tribute to this great institution, where I spent the most exciting five years seed time as a learner from 1973-78, and later utilized my knowledge and experience in the service of grooming thousands of young minds as a teacher of English language and literature. Of my total 38 years of service under the Department of Higher Education, I spent a very fruitful, successful period, from 1992-2010 at Ravenshaw College as a member of the faculty of the Department of English. But I had also other memorable roles to play as an Associate N.C.C. Officer of the Girls' Wing, N.C.C. and as a Superintendent of the Bhargavi Women's Hostel of Ravenshaw Autonomous College.

For me Ravenshaw was and is an ELYSIUM. I feel overwhelmed with gratitude and appreciation whenever I try to recollect the halcyon days spent in her lap, soaking myself with knowledge, courage, acquiring the capacity to grow, unfold, seek, inspire and lead! If I am what I am, it's because of her love and care, her serene yet sometimes stormy environment, her continuous blowing air into my unfurled wings, pushing me to fly and scale higher altitudes in my life and career. Needless to say, Ravenshaw college, especially the Department of English, has produced many distinguished personalities of our state, catapulting them to great achievements in various domains of work. Today while mentally roaming on her campus, I am going to tell the world how you cheered and reared me, to express my honest gratitude to the college and the Department, which has lived 100 years and celebrating her Centenary! I feel elated at the thought that I was part of this great institution!!

GRAND SALUTE TO YOU, MY ALMA MATER, RAVENSHAW!!!

When I entered the holy portals of Ravenshaw in July 1973, to take admission into graduation course, I was awestruck by her charming atmosphere, like many others coming from small villages and rural colleges. I opted for English Honours and Philosophy pass, because I did not like the tough Science subjects which I studied for two years at Angul Science College, as a compulsion with the hope of being a doctor, owing to family pressure. But I never had the ambition to be a doctor or engineer. I loved literature since the time I started learning to read. My literature school books were my most favourite and I gorged upon any literary text I could lay my hand on during my school life, be it Odia, English, Hindi, or Bengali which I had taught myself through the TRIVASHI book available at the time. I borrowed books, be it romance, crime thriller, novel. drama, poetry, be it from my school library, village library or a friend! By the end of my school, I had already prepared the manuscript of my first poetry book of rhymed verses, which of course never got published. Hence choosing to read English literature, was the call of my soul. I felt a kind of reverence for English language and literature through my limited exposure to it from the reading of small magazines such as *Wisdom*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Picture Post*, which my elder brothers, reading in different colleges, used to bring home during vacation.

As I crossed the quadrangle brocaded with lines and rows of multihued flowers flaunting the sundial at the centre, it was an overwhelming experience of joy, wonder and thrill for me. Excited at the thought of being a part of this renowned institution with rich history and heritage, and to be able to follow the footprints of acclaimed, illustrious alumni who have made our state and country proud, I felt small and scared. But my Alma Mater Ravenshaw was a noble soul, making no discrimination between the rich and the poor, the higher class and lower class, male or female, if one has the desire to learn and capacity to absorb. I had both in moderate measure, besides my simplicity and humility. Though flabbergasted by the accented English of some of our adorable young teachers at the beginning and by the stylish modern attire of my female counterparts, I continued my pursuit of knowledge with determination and did quite well. I was equally dumbfounded by the long racks of books in the Kanika library and failed to trace there any book I needed, as per our teachers' bibliography. But this Kanika library became a treasured alcove for me, because here I met my lover and future husband (who was an outstanding scholar and, if I am permitted to say so, the smartest guy in our Honours class.) We spent many happy hours of exciting togetherness here, before he came to meet me at my hostel.

My experience of the Women's hostel where I stayed for six years was more stimulating. Here I met new friends, became popular with both senior and junior boarders, because I was always ready to help others. Here I learnt the table manners, the value of punctuality, the necessity to express myself in different ways, both culturally and literally. I learnt to play badminton in the hostel playground, to play table tennis in the hostel common room. Most of all I learnt to read newspapers and magazines regularly, which opened my mind to the world around me and made me feel more confident. Though I did not have the courage to participate in competitions in the college, I participated in many competitions organized in the hostel and got many prizes that spurred my talent and gave me confidence. I became a member of the Executive Committee of the hostel elected representatives and learnt to take responsibility, to do shopping for the mess, to instruct the staff and supervise their action, to keep accounts and above all learnt to take leadership. The hostel offered me many opportunities to sharpen my speaking ability, my reading and writing skill as well as my leadership abilities.

Now I will focus back to the Department of English of Ravenshaw College of the 1970's. The college was not yet autonomous, but definitely inspiring, under the leadership of the then Principal Dr. Mahendra Rout of the Department of Chemistry and Professor Sarbeswar Dash in the Department of English. I do not know how many teachers were there in our Department, for I never dared to go near the staff Common Room, yet I remember those teachers who took our classes in Honours and P.G. Many illustrious, learned teachers like Sarbeswar Dash, Mahajiteswar Das, J. N. Pattanaik, Debendra Kumar Ray, Paresh Rout, M. Q. Khan, Amulya Samant, B. J. B. Mohapatra, Raghunath Panda, Sadananda Mishra, Dev Pattanaik, Ravi Sankar Mishra, Soubhagya Mishra, Sujit Mohanty, Chinmoy Jena, Devananda Mishra, Ramesh Mishra, Dinabandhu Rath, Pravati Mishra, SushamaTej, Bidyut Lata Nanda and so many others. Maybe I am forgetting the names of some teachers but I hold all my teachers in the highest esteem because they have inculcated not only the love of literature in us by explaining the complex nuances of literary texts but they also have opened our mind to the world beyond our physical grasp and to the so different culture of the West. Then it was a department full of life, throbbing with activity like seminars, speeches, welcome and farewell functions, Ganesh Puja and Saraswati Puja. I did not take part in many activities because I was a shy, reticent girl, afraid to open my mouth for the fear of speaking something wrong or with wrong accent. I must admit here that though my written English at that time was just acceptable, my oral English was terrible. After two years of science

studies, I had lost touch with literature and the flourish of English language. I dared not talk to any teacher or ask a question in the class to clear my doubts. I was the only disadvantaged girl among the four girls in our Honours class consisting of 48 students. I was distinct because I was from rural background and I was poor. I had studied in Odia medium school, so diffident in speech. Of course, the only one girl wearing a saree, while my friends were wearing stylish bell bottoms, skirts, jeans, tops and T shirts. I remember how well my friends and teachers spoke in English and how deficient I felt!

The first year of B.A. passed away in a daze, because I could neither follow most of the lectures nor concentrate on studies, because someone had started courting me from the day one, the day when in our English Compulsory class, I stood up as the only girl who had secured a First Division in the last examination. It was an introduction class being taken by Devananda Mishra. He was trying to get us acquainted with the demands of the course as well as the legacy of the institution. I hardly understood 40% of his English, yet I answered a few questions he asked about my past education trembling like a wet cat. But God had different designs for me. I am extremely grateful to my Alma Mater Ravenshaw for choosing the best man as life partner for her so shy daughter Sumitra. Dr. Mishra ultimately became a Professor of English and retired as the Director of Higher Education of our state. Till date he is my guide, guardian and my co-pursuer of excellence in the field of English literature and language studies. Both of us guide students for their Ph.D. degree as Supervisors and have successfully guided 16 scholars to get their Doctorate in English. Thank God, we crossed the many troubles and tribulations on our path, holding hands tightly, while navigating the ferry of our life as a couple.

Now the focus I will turn to my times as a teacher in Ravenshaw Autonomous college, later declared as Ravenshaw Unitary University. Times had changed. It was the 90's, the era of computers, information explosion. The Government had opened our economy and introduced a new corporate culture and the ultimate multinational intrusion into our economic flora. The students of these times were politically active, well-informed but rough. The respect for teachers was decreasing with proportion to the rise of the number of assessments and examinations. The Autonomy created a roguish attitude in the learners. I joined in August 1992, when Professor Prafulla Mohanty was the Head of the Department of English, located at the second floor of the Commerce Block. The physical atmosphere was all the same as I had left at 1978. But something was missing. The soul of Ravenshaw seemed distressed. Student unrest, teacher strike, employee strikes were the order of the day. I had spent 14 years away from my Alma Mater while serving as a Lecturer in English at F. M. College and K. K. S. Women's

College, Balasore. Now returning to the lap of my mother after 14 years of *vanavas* was like a rejuvenation of my life's joy. But teaching to the advanced and brilliant learners of Ravenshaw college was no easy task! I found myself at a loss! I questioned myself am I capable or worthy as a teacher to teach these brilliant, well-informed, well-taught students of Ravenshaw College?

But I tried to cope by learning, by reading and by training myself!

I still remember the jubilance I felt, when I stood on the pedestal of the classroom no. 26 of the Department of English, from where I had started my journey into the mesmerizing realm of English literature. Looking at the young, seraphic smiling faces, the blotched walls of the classroom and the blackboard broadcasting the naughty energy of the students, I certainly felt a bit nervous. But it was so satisfying to find myself on the same place where my esteemed teachers once lectured to us. I recollected all the wise words I had heard in these rooms and went on with my lecture. From 1992 to 2010, it was a roller coaster ride of learning and teaching, evaluating and being evaluated, guiding and being guided, enjoying it all. I never felt depressed or dejected when criticized or derided, for I was there to learn from each and every person; students, teachers, peers, administrators, and grow, grow to become a complete human being.

My alma mater Ravenshaw and particularly the Department of English did that to me. It incorporated in me boldness, confidence and chased away my timidity. She built me into a leader, a mentor, a researcher, a responsible worker as she does to all her children, who come to her diffident yet full of aspiration to touch the sky. My students were my strength. They appreciated my teaching and opened their difficulties to me. It was rewarding to be able to help so many brilliant minds. Through seminars and symposium, functions and activities, the English Department exposed me to diverse characters and personalities, gave me opportunity to hear the learned lectures of many distinguished professors from our country as well as of international dignitaries. I never did derelict in my duty nor ever debunked any peer or learner. For me they were all my teachers, in some respect or the other.

I cannot but focus back on the campus life. I stayed in the college quarters inside the campus for 10 years from 1994-2004, before we shifted to our new house at Bhubaneswar. These ten years inside the campus were both exciting and memorable. I got opportunity to host some great personalities of the institution and some guests who had been invited to the Department as well as the hostels. When both Dr. Gangadhar Mishra and me were members of the faculty of the English, we escorted students to

picnics and enjoyed their company a lot. Besides these, we had a memorable trip with the students of Communicative English to Calcutta, where we met the famous quiz master Derek O'Brien and visited the radio and television centres. Besides these, we participated whole heartedly in all Department functions, and seminars. Two colleagues of our Department, Dr. Bijay Bal and Dr. Rashmi Mishra were staying very close to our quarters inside the college campus. We developed close friendship with their families. The stay in the campus was very helpful to me because it was close to our Department and I was able to come and go at ease, which made my life as a mother of three school going children easier.

Before I end, I want to express my gratitude to the Department of English of Ravenshaw College with these words;

THANK YOU RAVENSHAW FOR GIVING ME SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES AS A LEARNER AND TEACHER TO REALIZE MY POTENTIAL.

[Dr. Mrs. Sumitra Mishra is a renowned academician who superannuated as the Principal, Government Women's College, Sambalpur. She is also an acclaimed writer with 22 books in Odia and 8 books in English.]



Ravenshaw, My Ravenshaw

Dr. Subash Chandra Patra
M.A.: 1976-78

On or off the campus, Ravenshaw has been my shaping force since the day I stepped into the Precincts of this holy Alma mater of mine. My first reaction was awe and wonder. I felt like standing at the foot of a mountain or on the shore of a sea. I was overwhelmed by its sheer magnificence. What impressed me most is the beautiful British architecture, the sprawling frontage and the academic aura that was so invisibly visible. Its sheer look generated a confidence in me and all the while I heard from within, 'this institution will not let anyone down.' This unflinching trust on the reputation of the institution became the bedrock of my academic pursuit there. I took its reputation and its glorious march over the years as real and true. My first impression got doubly reinforced when my classes began and my enlightenment coincided with it.

To be more or less precise, I stepped into Ravenshaw in the third week of July, 1976 to drop my form for admission into the first year of M.A. in English. The college was under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Mahendra Kumar Rout who was as effervescent as ever and we promptly got our intimation for admission on 02 August and the classes were to start on 05 August. We were caught unawares. No hostel allotment could be made as the last year M.A. students, called the 7th year students, were yet to vacate the hostels. This was a funny academic scenario at that time because post graduate examinations were never held as per schedule in the month of April or May. It was usually held in July or August and when the new entrants, the 5th year or M.A. 1st year students come, they were greeted with 'no hostel accommodation.' announcements. Some of my friends met Dr. Rout and he pacified them by saying that until hostel selection, the Department had been asked to take introductory classes, engage in remedial teaching and to discuss the syllabus with the students. Local students had no problem. Out station students like me had to search for local accommodation or to leave for home only to return after hostel selection was made. For almost a month I adjusted with my friend in S.C.B. Medical College Gents Hostel. That was the time. No one nowadays will ever either approach for the same or oblige the 'caller'. I am thankful to my friend Dr. Ranjan Kumar Patra who allowed me to share his bed and the bite of

mosquitoes at night! We too enjoyed or suffered the postponement of final exam, as breaking all records it was held in the first week of November and ended on 2nd December, 1978. The records do not end there. The result was also published in a record time - July 1979, only after 8 months!

Getting a seat in the college hostel is a recognition of one's merit. It facilitates the smooth academic pursuit without any hassles. However, that is not the case always. I was allotted a seat in the old P.G. Hostel at OMP square. It did not have the ambience of a hostel. Since it was close to the National Highway, there was always the cacophony of the vehicles and the bus hawkers coupled with it a sense of weakness which I developed whenever a saw a bus to Balasore parked in front of the hostel taking passengers. I was so homesick that I always felt like boarding any Balasore or Baripada bound Bus. Besides, daily movement from the hostel at OMP to Ravenshaw College, in between crossing the railway line, was not exactly a pleasant experience. I always thought of shifting to a hostel inside the campus. Fortunately, my wish got fulfilled when one of my counterparts wanted to shift from New Hostel to the P.G. Hostel at OMP. Unlike East and West Hostel, New Hostel at that time housed students of all classes from P.G. to Intermediate. I stayed in Room No. 25 which was in the Ground floor. Two rooms away stayed Prof. Gyan Sharma of Commerce who was the Assistant Superintendent of the Hostel. This was something unique. Staying so close to a teacher, sharing the same toilet, getting intimate with him and still maintaining an honourable distance. Prof. Sharma was so nice and dignified. My room mates were Nilamber Mohanty, final year Odia; my friend from Balasore Sunil Satpathy, P.G. first year (Physics) and another intermediate student whose name I cannot recollect. The room was four seated. After some months, on the basis of honours marks, I was allotted a double-bedded room in the first floor of the hostel where I stayed with my Balasore classmate Manmath Nayak (Odia). All our eyes were rivetted on the upcoming New P.G. Hostel which was being built nearby. Dr. Asit Kabi of the Department of Odia was our Superintendent. Finally New P.G. Hostel was ready for occupation. Prof. Chitrananda Nanda took over the charge of the Superintendent of the Hostel. He lived in the campus close to the New Hostel. Since there were many claimants for the same room of the New P.G. Hostel. Prof. Nanda adopted a funny tactics. On a piece of paper he wrote the roll numbers of the interested students who wanted to occupy the rooms at the earliest. He called a cowherd boy tending cattle inside the campus. He gave the boy a pen and asked him to underline the roll number one by one. It was a sort of lottery. The student whose roll number is underlined first will have the choice to occupy any room of the

hostel along with his roommate chosen by him and the process was to go likewise. I was delighted that the boy underlined my roll number which was 391 and after winning the 'lottery' I felt like 'a monarch of all I surveyed' - the entire hostel with all the rooms at my disposal! I chose room no. 68 in the second floor and my roommate was Ranjit Kumar Das of Economics Department who retired as a senior bank officer (NABARD). Next to my room stayed Keshab Nandy (English) who retired as Senior Officer of R.B.I. and Hemanta Kumar Behera (English) who retired as a teacher in Kendriya Vidyalaya. Next to that room was occupied by Srikanta Chatterjee who went on to become the President of the Ravenshaw Students Union and retired as a Senior Officer of the Indian Revenue Service. My batch topper and literary champion of the college, Krushna Bal stayed in the third floor having been given single room for his honours marks. For some months his father also stayed with him. Krushna was not a member of the hostel mess. The rooms of the hostel were meant for single occupants. However, Principal Dr. Rout made it double seated because many P.G. students could not get institutional accommodation.

Ravenshaw at that time under the able leadership of Dr. Mahendra Kumar Rout was at the pinnacle of glory. There was beauty, there was discipline, there was order all around. During my entire two-year period of study, not a single class was dropped. I bow down before all my teachers who were all epitome of sincerity and dedication. I remember almost all my teachers with their assignments. While Professor and Head of the Department, Nanda Kishore Mishra taught us *Dr. Faustus* and *Duchess of Malfi*, the next senior most teacher Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra taught us Chaucer's *Prologue to Canterbury Tales* and *Bacon's Essays*. Prof. D. K. Ray showed his brilliance and critical acumen with Metaphysical poets and poems of W. B. Yeats. Prof. Paresh Chandra Rout in his spotless white and Stephenian accent overwhelmed us while dealing with texts like *Tom Jones* and *Odes* of John Keats. Prof. R. N. Panda was as systematic as ever. With clarity and conviction, he presented us Milton's *Paradise Lost - BooK I and II* and Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Prof. M. Q. Khan brought to the class the sunshine of cheerfulness. Affectionate and amiable, he enjoyed teaching the two texts he was assigned Congreve's *Way of the World* and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra looked buoyant and confident bubbling with youth and energy as his reputation as an established Odia poet used to usher him into the class. His teaching of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and Eliot's *Four Quartets* was always marked by a sense of authority. Prof. Sadananda Mishra with *Dunciad Book - IV*, Prof. Bibhu Prasad Padhi with *Women in Love* and Prof. Chinmoy Jena with *Waiting for Godot* were as impressive as ever. Professor Padhi and Professor Jena looked quite young and

a bit shy. During our time, Jitu Pattanaik got his doctoral degree under Professor BidhuBhusan Das and he dealt with Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. As I opted for Linguistics and Method of Teaching as my special papers, D. K. Ray with Method, Ramesh Chandra Mishra with Phonetics and Sadananda Mishra with Linguistics overwhelmed us with their clarity of thought and understanding. Madam Shanta Acharya, Fredrick Wright, A. C. Samant did not take our classes. Madam Acharya and Professor Wright mesmerized students opting for American Literature as Special Papers. In our batch only Krushna Bal opted for Translation as Special Papers and he chose Surendra Mohanty's 'Maralara Mrutyu' as the text for his translation studies. We basked in glory when we saw the English Poems of Soubhagya Kumar Mishra and Bibhu Prasad Padhi appearing in Illustrated Weekly of India.

II

I am fortunate to have classmates and friends who were so cordial, helpful and intellectually shining. I remember the names of quite a few. They are Krushna Bal, Rabi Acharya, Jitu Pati, Swarup Mohapatra, Lulu Samantray, Rishi Agrawal, Bijay Sahu, Ananta Sahu, Bhabagrahi Bal, Antaryami Nayak, Pradipta Swain, Bhatruhari Mahatab, Mayadhar Moharana, Saroj Behera, Basanta Mohanty, Nirmal Mohapatra, Nihar Mohapatra, Satyajit Das, Neeroj Kumar Das, Ashok Kumar Das, Manoj Behera, Hemanta Behera, Keshab Nandy, Anil Bhatta, Partha Chakrabarty, Gajanan Behera etc. From among the girls, the names of Sanjukta Mohapatra, Madhumita Ghosh. Rajalaxmi Swain, Swadha Mishra, Kamala Behera, Chanchala Nayak, Binapani Mishra, Sashi Naidu etc. come to my mind. Sanjukta retired as Principal Sailabala Women's College and presently she is President of Cuttack Club. Chanchala retired as Professor of English from E.F.L.U., Hyderabad.

Among all my class mates, Krushna Bal towers over all. Two times winner of the Utkal University Chancellor's Trophy - once for English Debate and next time for Odia Debate, Krushna is an orator par excellence. Extremely sharp and original in his observation, he had the penchant to take the bull by its horns. He was both an elected and a nominated Student Union Leader - elected in his first or second year in Ravenshaw College and nominated during the time of emergency in 1976. He hailed from Ghanteswar, Bhadrak and had an unhappy family background having lost his mother at an early age. That steeled him and, in a way, made him a nonconformist and a social 'iconoclast'. However, his talent won for him hearts at right and important places - Dr. Rout, the Principal, being one such person. In spite of his unpredictable behaviour Dr.

Rout loved him, helped him. He followed his own grammar of life. He was not a member of the hostel mess. He used to take meals outside. He took more 'Bada' and tea than rice and dal. On the day of examination, he would go out of the hostel at around 8 am whereas the exam was to start at 11 am. He would move in Chhatra Bazar, take his usual 'meals' and come to the staircase of the Commerce Block at around 10.30 am. He would make fun with girls like Rajalaxmi or Swadha or others sitting in their cars and having a last glance over the exam materials. Krushna would go to their car windows and disturb them with the words, 'I will dislodge the materials you have serialised in the brain for the exam hall!' They would implore and Krushna would disappear only to appear at the foot of the Commerce Block staircase to pinch a boy here or a girl there. In the exam hall, he was a different person altogether; very serious, very fast in writing the answers. Within one and half hour, he would finish the main answer script and at times come out of the exam hall after first hour or second hour to smoke and then return to begin with renewed zeal. The invigilators pretended not to have seen anything. Krushna stood first in our batch, worked as a lecturer in Government Colleges for three to four years, had two transfers - from Rourkela to Parlakehmundi and then finally to Bhadrak, his native place which also saw him getting into Indian Allied Service.

Among other friends, I remember Rabi Acharya and Jitu Pati. Rabi was very hardworking and methodical and had always a question to ask in the class which in a way made the class lively. Jitu was very original, especially his understanding of Eliot placed him on a higher pedestal. He retired as Reader in English. Rabi who began his career as a sub re-registrar, Baliapal, Balasore retired as a senior R.B.I. officer so also Keshab Nandy who later quit R.B.I. to join private sector. Bijoy Sahu, Rishi Agarwal, Swarup Mohapatra and Lulu Samantray belonged to the flamboyant group as they were more or less local boys. Bhartruhari Mahatab was very modest and did not parade his ego or identity. My most intimate friends were Ananta Sahu and Manoj Behera, both from Balasore and both are retired bankers.

III

I am privileged to have teachers in Ravenshaw College who were unique in their own ways. They were exceptionally brilliant in their classroom performance but more importantly they were very helpful, cordial and inspirational. Of all my teachers, Paresh Chandra Rout stands out. As he was from St. Stephen's New Delhi, his quality of English coupled with his voice and tone was mesmerizing. He handled the text like Tom Jones which runs to 900 pages with diligence. First, he provided a thorough

understanding of the text having detailed analysis and then he went on to the critical aspects of the novel. He inspired us so much that we used to take down whatever he 'dictated'. Only because he referred to the book, *English Novel: Form and Function* by Dorothy Van Ghent while analysing the text, I procured a copy from Fakir Mohan College Library through my teacher Dr. Manmath Kundu and could go through the analysis of *Tom Jones* by Van Ghent in detail. He instilled so much of clarity and confidence into us that I volunteered to teach *Tom Jones* to P.G. Students at Khallikote College, Berhampur where I was posted on ad hoc basis soon after my P.G. His analysis of Keats' *Odes* was equally scintillating. Teachers like him make you so thorough in their assignments that lifelong you become a votary of the author or the text. I still remember some of his line while teaching. He was very particular that students should take down important points of his teaching. Once when he found some students not following him in writing, he said, "Gentleman, do not trust your memory too much. Memory is like a prostitute who ditches you when you need her most." In reaction to a late comer to his class, he said, "Gentleman, you are too early for the next class." Prof. M. Q. Khan was also very helpful though he did not have the flamboyance of Prof. P. C. Rout. Once I went to his official residence on the campus near the overhead tank. I asked for a book of criticism on Passage to India which he was teaching. He gave me *Cave and the Mountain:A Study of E. M. Forster* by Wilfred Stone with the words that I should return the book within 15 days. Prof. D. K. Ray was very cordial too and I was fortunate to be his colleague in Khalikote College, Berhampur in 1980-81. Later on, I became more intimate with him to the extent of being a member of his family. Prof. Soubhagya Mishra was kind enough to put his hand of blessings on my head.

We used to have off the class interaction with teachers, may be on the campus or outside. At times they turn out to be very interesting. When one day we met Prof. N. K. Mishra in his quarters on the Campus to discuss certain aspects of drama and poetry, we saw how possessive he was about Shakespeare. When one of my friends just uttered the name of T. S. Eliot, Prof. Mishra reacted sharply, "What is there in Eliot which does not figure in Shakespeare? Take it from me, Shakespeare exhausted all possibilities of exploration of human life and situation."

Once we had a funny experience with Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra. Rain or shine, he used to carry an umbrella. Once we decided to follow him when he was moving from his quarters to Chhatra Bazar. One of my friends gathered courage. Prof. Mohapatra was known to be very witty and sharp. He asked, "Sir, what's the secret of your hair (his hair being black at his age)?", to which Prof. Mohapatra replied, "Follow me, I do not care for my hair." Next it was my turn to venture. I spoke in Odia. I asked, "Sir, I heard you were in F. M. College, when?" In came a very sharp reply, "When were you born?"

I was caught unawares. I abruptly said, "Sir, 1956." He said, "I was in F. M. College in two phases - once before you were born, next after your birth. Dr. Manmath Nath Das, historian was my colleague, his younger brother Manoj Das was my student. Most of the school teachers from North Balasore were my students." I just nodded my head and listened. All of a sudden, he uttered something with a jerk, "Are the people of Balasore thieves?" I felt, jolted and just said, "Sir...." He elaborated and said, "You see, I was unmarried then. I engaged a young boy as domestic help and cook. I was staying at Bairam Nagar in Jamini Nanda's house. One day when I returned home, I found the boy gone and with him went all my belongings. He even took away my broomsticks. Do you know, I had to set up a new 'sansar' the next day!" Since he expressed something which once hurt him, I therefore did not mind his generalisation, anyway my interaction was more or less cordial.

IV

I was not fortunate enough to be the student of Prof. Sarbeswar Das who by that time was transferred from Ravenshaw College to State Museum, Bhubaneswar. However, he was staying in his quarters on the campus. That gave me an opportunity to see the 'tall man' as I have picturized him in my mind. My friend Jitu Pati facilitated my 'darshan' of Prof. Das. One late afternoon while Jitu and I were going to college square, we met Sarbeswar Sir near the Ladies Hostel. Jitu was his old honours student and hence was known and intimate to him. Immediately Prof. Das came up with a 'bunch of love' from his pockets - fried groundnut which he offered to us. I was bit reluctant as I was a bit of a stranger to him. He did not allow that 'distance' to set in. He said, "Do not you take groundnut? It is good for health. It gives energy." We talked for some minutes and then he left. Jitu told me Sir was in the habit of offering something to his students -groundnut, oranges etc. On the occasion of Holi, we met sir in his quarters. He fed us with some snacks and lamented how he is 'rotting' in the Museum having been deprived of teaching in Ravenshaw.

I had a feeling of deprivation that I could not be Professor Sarbeswar Das's direct student. I lamented that I could not listen to his class room teaching! God was kind to listen to my agony and I was suitably compensated when I joined as his colleague in Khalikote College, Berhampur in September 1979. Prof. Ashok Shankar Mitra was the Principal and Prof. Das was the HOD of English. One remarkable thing about Prof. Das was that he took those assignments which are supposed to be hard and for which

there were no takers - be it Moliere or Montaigne. He always said, "If any topic or text is hard or new, let us read and teach. Are we inferior to our students?" With this argument he opened Linguistics as special paper in Ravenshaw College. His classroom teaching was beyond the Departmental time table. Even when he became Principal of Khalikote College, he continued teaching - yes, teaching for hours without looking at the clock or the timetable.

He showed a different self when he became the Principal of the college after Professor Mitra's retirement. Khalikote College at that time was a hub of young lecturers. There were more than forty teachers who were in their twenties, all joined on ad hoc basis. Professor Das loved the young souls always saying, "you are all my sons." He was very cordial and hospitable to us. Whenever we visited him in his quarters, he would ask his attendant to arrange some snacks for us. I was 'greedy' enough to take advantage of his generosity in a different way. I used to visit him every now and then in his chamber. He knew that it was a purposeless visit and would make me comfortable by not asking what for I came in. On the other hand, he would ask his orderly to prepare coffee- three cups-one for me, one for him and one for the orderly. He had an ocean-like heart. During these frequent visits, I had a glimpse of the nobility in him and his concern for others. Three incidents come to my mind. On one occasion after coffee, he offered me a piece of paper 'containing' a poem written by him. I read with care and palpitation, 'Who am I to judge his creativity?' After reading I asked him, 'Sir, it is said that you write poems, show them to some dear ones, to your wife who too is a creative writer and then tear them to pieces.' 'What more can I do?' He said, "When there are Kalidasa and Shakespeare, original voices, why should readers read the echo, the repetition - Sarbeswar Das." I said that poems far inferior to his were readily being published. He said, "That is atrocity. We should not take our readers for granted, should not torture them by subjecting them to read any trash and nonsense."

The second incident relates to a travelling expense bill of a teacher. Prof. Das was going through the bill and was about to sign when he halted. He asked the bill clerk to call the teacher concerned. The man in question came. Very politely Sir said, "Look, you have submitted a transfer travelling expense bill running to some hundreds. It is all fair. But I have a problem. Please recollect, we came the same day by Konark Express from Bhubaneswar. You were also staying in the Teachers' Annexe in front of my quarters. You have claimed travelling expenses for you, your family and, for the transport of goods. Officially you are right. But, I feel a moral pick? Please advise what shall I do." The teacher was almost in tears. He said, "It was prepared by the office. I was not eager." And with folded hands he said the bill be withdrawn. It may be mentioned that

Prof. Das never claimed any sort of travelling allowance or expenses throughout his career in order not to subject him to become untrue to his soul!

The third incident relates to a colleague of mine - Sailendra Tripathy who also worked there. One day Sir told me, "Ask Sailendra to take care. I see him talking to Ashoka. I know his family condition. He has a widowed mother at home. Please tell him that he should be sure that he is not in 'love with love.' It happens in life. He should be sure. In fact, his beard reminds me of my son Jyoti. I am a bit concerned." I intimated the matter to Sailendra but he had proceeded quite far and ultimately married Ashoka. I was witness to another incident where - Sailendra prominently figured. Once a seminar on Shakespeare's Tragedies was organised by the English Department of the College in collaboration with the Department of English of Berhampur University. Prof. Byotkesh Tripathy, Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty were among the speakers. D. K. Ray was our HOD and Prof. Das was the Principal. While the talks and discussions were in full swing, Prof. Das was found scribbling something on a paper. We thought he was noting down some points to deliberate when his turn came. His turn came, he spoke brilliantly explaining Shakespeare with the help of Shakespeare, profusely quoting from texts only, without ever referring to any critic. At the end of the proceeding, he came up with that paper and handed it over to Sailendra, saying "does it match you?" Very few people knew Prof. Das was an artist too.

Prof. Sarbeswar Das was all nobility rolled into one. He is a lover of students, of humanity, of knowledge and that perhaps accounts for his getting beaten by the police in Ravenshaw when he flung himself before them to save the students from the batons of the police. It was a ritual for the police but Prof. Das got his leg broken which made him a bit handicapped for his entire life. Sarberswar Das appears to be an amiable, saintly person. But when the question of principles, moral convictions, self- honour comes he stands his ground like a rock. One incident comes to my mind. Every inch an original teacher, Prof. Das did not enjoy his Principalship at Khallikote College. In spite of heavy demands on his time and energy, he never refrained from taking classes. In that frame of I mind, he made a representation to the Government seeking his transfer to Ravenshaw College as Professor because he wanted to retire from his Alma mater where he spent major part of his academic life. He had only some months of service left. There was an interesting line in his representation. He said, "In Khallikote College, I have been reduced to a Principal." Fortunately, Government accepted his request and placed him as Professor in Ravenshaw College. The news was greeted with cheers and celebration in Ravenshaw. It was, however, short-lived. The vested interest located in the Department of English who did not want Prof. Das's return sought the interference

from the highest level with a particular plea which smacked of self-interest. The Evil had a precedence over Good. The order was cancelled and Prof. Das was ordered to serve as Professor of the Department in Khalikote College relinquishing the charge of the Principal. That was too much for a personality of honour like Sarbeswar Das. He did not join his reverted assignment. He retired in absentia in January 1982. Financially, he lost a lot but there was moral and spiritual victory behind this loss.

I met him last on 22 June 2009 when I went on to hand over the citation of honour given by Fakir Mohan Sahitya Parishad, Balasore at his Bhubaneswar residence. I met him after 1981 - a gap of 28 years. He was kind enough to bless me with his warm affection. I feel privileged-that he gave me three books as gifts-his own 'Death and the two voices of Walt Whitman'; translation of 'Salabega's Jananas' (Songs of Salabega...) and a book by his wife, Basanta Kumari Devi, 'Nasta Nidara Bihangi' with his autograph. His values, his personality, his commitment to the cause dear to his heart have immortalised him. His colleagues and students do not miss him a moment even a decade after his death.

V

I consider my period of studentship as the golden age of the college. It was precisely because Dr. M. K. Rout was at the helm of affairs. He was always for the cause of students and institution. I firmly remember his contributions of which we were direct beneficiary. Once some boarders of New P.G. Hostel in which I also stayed met Dr. Rout and drew his attention to some issues of the hostel relating to food and basic amenities. He promised to visit the hostel in the evening. He kept his word, came in the evening and there was a meeting of the boarders with the Principal and the Superintendent. We drew his attention to the poor quality of food and the absence of fans in our rooms. Dr. Rout immediately promised that fans will be installed in all rooms within seven days. About the demand to increase the mess dues from 60 rupees upwards, he said that there were many students who were unable to pay even the monthly mess dues of Rs. 60.00. Hence, he offered a small compromise formula. He said that for official purposes, the mess charges will be 60 rupees per month, but we were allowed to pay 10 rupees as an extra amount for enhancement of quality on a separate receipt book. He asked Dr. Chitrananda Nanda and hostel accountant Purna Chandra Behuria to do the needful.

Another significant contribution of Dr. Rout was the shifting of the Kanika Library to Centenary Library and the opening up of the Reading room which functioned

so nicely from 10 am to 9 pm. The ambience was so conducive for reading and P.G. students were provided a separate chamber at the back of the Hall. Every day he used to pay a visit to the Reading Room to see its functioning and to weed out the blacksheep, if any, from the reading room who were either sleeping or gossiping. His love for the campus, its beauty was so visible. He was very possessive about of the beauty of the college quadrangle and the lawn. No one was ever allowed to trespasses into the lawn as the gardeners were extremely vigilant and offenders were produced before the Principal and they were usually fined. The riot of colours in the quadrangle because of the seasonal winter flowers was a delight to see. He followed a fixed routine for the benefit of the institution. He used to come to the college around 10.30 am taking as per his own statement 'chuda and dahi'. At lunch time he would return to his quarters for a short time, in the afternoon he would go around the campus and invariably visit the reading room.

In the evening he would be in the Research lab. During day time he would even take some classes. Around 10 pm, he would go around the campus in his Fiat car in his typical night suit which invariably was a Khurda lungi, blue in colour and a deshi half-sleeve 'ganzi'. When he chose, he would move round in formal attire. At times during his noctural visit, PET Jagadananda Das used to follow him in his Vespa scooter. An incident concerning the Reading room drew the students more to Dr. Rout. There was a rule that if any book was found tempered, the student concerned would have to deposit the price of the book and till that time his identity card and library card would remain seized. An innocent boy fell a victim to this rule. He did not verify the pages before getting it issued in his name. At the time of return, the staff concerned detected it, seized his cards and reported the matter to the Principal. The boy was summoned. Initially Dr. Rout was rigid about carrying out the rule. The boy pleaded with the Principal, reinforcing his innocence. Finally, he burst into tears, narrated the poor but ideal background he hailed from. Dr. Rout was convinced. He asked his steno who used to sit in a corner of his chamber to go out. What followed next was a revelation for the boy. Dr. Rout paid the whole amount to the boy to enable him to deposit the same as notified. He said that let the rules be observed and let human kindness have its place. Dr. Rout asked the boy to keep the matter a closely guarded secret which somehow got leaked.

The test of an institution is its endurance. Ravenshaw has endured time, the vagaries of its won administrators and Government. It stands as a beacon to 'enlighten' us and to revisit time past, time present and time future.



My Days in Ravenshaw – In Retrospect

Dr. Pradipta Kumar Swain
M.A.: 1976-78

For a timid boy fresh from the village school, a changeover to the college life is an ordeal (A line from a book named Probable Essays).

This literature is dedicated to the fond memory of my revered teachers and loving friends, dead or alive. I do not know whether the good old days of 1972-78 are still in their memory, for life is a process of sedimentising everything into a rocklike hardness where once it was soft and throbbing with life. The school which manufactured me as a matriculate was Nayabazar High School, situated at a stone's throw distance from Ravenshaw College. On joining the corridor of Ravenshaw, the first thing which delighted me was the migration of the entire student population of the class from one room to the other which was an anathema to school life. sometimes the distance between the two class rooms was quite measurable. The unbridled freedom endowed upon me was a metaphoric 'Forbidden Fruit' and that gave every student of my age a license either to make his career or to mar it. After completing Intermediate with a distinguished first class, I joined the Department of English to pursue Literature as an Honours student. Those were the days when my academic association with two young girls of my age made me a bit romantic and I used to sip imaginary nectarines from imaginary dishes. The memory of these two damsels faded with time and the prejudices that go with it.

Two or three months elapsed and then came the College Election. Let me recollect my experiences of this event which seemed to me a pre-election hysteria. The College walls which gaped back at me told their own stories. Colorful block letters mocked your eyesight and declared proudly that they belonged more to the institution than you do because they were there right when the college started and they were optimistic enough to think that they would continue to be there until the college tumbles down to nothingness.

My first Honours Classes commenced in the month of July 23rd 1974 if I can correctly remember it. Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra broke the ice. He was doing History of English Literature and started with Metaphysical Poetry. Subsequently, many new faces

of the department interacted with us but Prof. B. J. B.'s lines still ring in the inner recesses of my mind. The first line he spoke was, "the metaphysicals owed their name and nature to Dr. Johnson and they survived, if at all, under the shadow of Milton." The class went tremendously well and soon after the class, as was normal during our days, we, one or two students, chased Prof. Mohapatra to the Staff Common Room. I was so much impressed by his style of teaching that I, in my sub conscious, felt like having him in all future classes, but that was next to impossible.

Again B. J. B. sir was seen in my second year Hons. Class and commenting on John. Donne, he said, "Donne's poetry shows all the symptoms of a fever. He was 30 by the time Queen Elizabeth died and like all who reached manhood in that more robust epoch, his torments came mostly from within. There is no retreat in his religious verse, rather a fierce grappling with the mysteries of dogma and a hideous reality of death. He doesn't, like the later metaphysicals, soar into the Empyrean or abandon himself in feminine surrender to the arms of God. The earth is always solid under Donne."

In all my future years, both as a student and a faculty member of this prestigious department, I have hardly come across a Professor of B. J. B.'s personality whose stature used to cast a long shadow on the Department of English itself. There is no single class of him which I can remember I missed. Even inclement weather, instead of playing a spoil sport, didn't diminish my spirit to brave the vagaries of nature and I used to remain present in his classes, no matter, how many skies had fallen. I still preserve the diary with me in which I have treasured all the running notes, so diligently maintained in every page of the diary. It has become a possession as dear to me as my soul itself.

As a P.G. student Prof. Sarbeswar Dash taught us Modern Poetry and Modern Drama. Even during my Hons. period of study, I had matured myself so much so that I could distinguish between average and extraordinary teaching. Prof. Dash's first class was on Modern Poetry and he started the introductory part of it with these lines, 'Modern Poetry has sensitively registered the far-reaching changes and turbulences of the modern times. That is why, much of it is cryptic and elliptical, marked by an all – pervasive symbolism which the reader feels but cannot always interpret in terms of reason'. Continuing the discussion further he added, Eliot's poems do not merely create a satirist's vision of society or an artist's private sense of personal predicament. They go with the terse indications to evoke a genuinely prophetic vision of a breakdown in life itself, a waste land, general to humanity, in which, nothing connects with nothing. There is no

notion of keeping poetry free from middlebrow preoccupation like social reality. Rather there is an anguished concern to register a sick world or to make contact with something which might restore the springs of human vitality and human goodness.'

I still remember Dr. Amulya Samant whose presence in our class one day was more of an accident. It was originally Prof. Frederick Wright's class and because he was on leave, Prof. Samant sneaked in and asked us the assignment. It was Arnold's "Dover Beach" Prof. Wright was half way through. Dr. Samant, a seasoned timber of an academician said, "In Arnold's opinion that which his time demanded, above all thing, was the discovery of a shore, not false or impossible, towards which to steer. We need some Columbus to guide us over a trackless ocean to a new continent which he discovers. But our misfortune is that we can find no such Pilot". Wonderful perception Juxtaposed with a powerful range of vocabulary is all that mattered most when Dr. AmulyaSamant was the faculty in the classroom.

The teachers who loved me the most and addressed me either with my name or surname were Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra and Dr. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra. Both constitute two distinct milestones in my memory. Another incident of my student- days goes like this. Prof. Dash was doing Modern Poetry. He was superb in all his classrooms. When the class was over, we emerged from the lecture- theatre. Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra caught me by my arms from behind and asked me to follow him to his residence. It was always an opportunity to spend time with B. J. B. Sir. We travelled twin to his residence and on the road I was curious enough to check the brainwave of Prof. B. J. B. as regards Modern Poetry. When I quoted Prof. Dash, B. J. B. Sir, without batting an eyelid said, "You see Swain, much of Modern Poetry is a morass of petty cleverness, effetely knowledgeable, spongy and talkative." By then we had reached his residence and I wish the distance had been a bit longer so that I could have gathered a few pearl-like sentences slipping through his lips.

Prof. R. N. Panda was doing Milton's, *Paradise Lost*. Once when he entered the class, it was all noisy and all hell let loose. Prof. Panda addressed the class saying, 'I am to discuss Milton's *Pandemonium* but your class helps me visualise it. Then suddenly we became silent by his surgical wit. Of many young lecturers, two deserve special mention. One was Prof. Wright whose typically British accent made us flabbergasted. He was matchless in his own way and had a beautiful sense of a dress-code. A young and dynamic personality, he maintained a friendly aura which pervaded him Whenever

we wished him, like an elder brother, he returned our wishes with a genial smile. He had a transparent personality with nothing to hide, hence was extremely likeable. I remember we, four or five friends, went for a little snacks in the mixture-stall facing the Department of Psychology and Prof. Wright joined us. I was prompted from within to ask him to define 'drama'. Prof. Wright immediately defined drama as "a story of human conflicts, in dialogue form, projected by speech and action, from the stage to the audience". No definition of drama I came across in future life could match the elegance and brevity as that of Prof. Wright's.

In one class, Prof. Chinmoy Jena was teaching us *Waiting for Godot*. The class went well and we were amazed at the rich and perceptive teaching by Dr. Jena and one thing I noticed in him was his unpretentious style. I asked him, "Sir why are there so many pauses and silences in the play?" He answered in his usual style that, "Speech is nothing more than a window-dressing and in the twilight world of the tramps' waiting communication breaks-down pitiably."

I joined as a lecturer in English Government College Rourkela in September 1979 and one year after when I reached B. J. B. college to meet one of my friends in the Department of English, Chinmoy Sir was there on the faculty. I saw him occupied with setting a question paper for Hons. Students. The play was, *As You Like It* and he seemed to have spilled much ink to frame a question. When I wished him he was overwhelmed to see me and asked, "Swain, please write a question on *As You Like It*. It was a kind of an intellectual adventure to speak or write something in the presence of someone who taught you for years together in a college. So immediately out of obligation to my respected teacher I wrote one line which read like this, "*As You Like It*, is a pastoral play but it does not confine its life to keeping sheep." I did not disclose the source of the sentence to A. W. Verity. Chinmoy Sir was so happy that he complimented me and my scholarship there and then. In future years, whenever we have knocked against each other it is an affable disposition which he displayed.

It would be uncharitable if I do not speak a few words about Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra, an equivalent elder brother to me, my mentor and my spirit's brother. It was he who went a long way in telling me that a study of English literature is going to be the be-all and end-all of my life. But for him this write-up would not have gone through the three stages of conception, gestation and delivery. He was after me tooth and nail to give a finishing touch to my writing and submit it at the nick of time so that it will not

be too late for a rejection. Thanks to him. But the real force to reckon with who enthused me into a perusal of English literature was Dr. Jatin Nayak. Jatin Bhai was really instrumental in telling me that English literature should be my vocation and avocation and finally I accepted English as my lifetime profession.

Many names and incidents will be inevitably missing in so brief a survey but the events that have had a lingering impact on my sensitive mental plate are touched upon as vividly as possible because language has its own innate constraints and limitations. Language sometimes fails to explore the real possibilities of life. However, I have become candid enough to recapitulate the memories and you know memories are such that they have a dangerous tendency to slip through your fingers. To all my friends and teachers I beg apology for not mentioning their names since there is a page limit constraint on me.

In this twilight and sunset phase of life, many things have been left unfinished and I bear no grudge against life. I thank Providence for giving me the best college for higher study, the quintessential teachers as my faculty members and a good number of friends without whom life would have been dull, wooden and insipid. To wind up, let me quote Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra who once said to me, "Swain, we live only once and if we live it right once is enough".

And that still remains a safe minimum claim on behalf of life, I mean human life, at large.

[Dr. Pradipta Kumar Swain is a well known educationist who superanuated as the Principal of Bhadrak Autonomous College. He has presented erudite papers at various National Level Seminars. Post his superannuation, Dr. Swain remains occupied with his favourite pastime - reading.]

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Ravenshaw: Misty Evening at Commerce Block

Mr. Baldev Samantaray
M.A.: 1976-78

The moth eaten fringes of grey asphalt
holding on to the sweet memories
of soil beneath with all five
whispering petals of yellow Gulmohar doting its edges.

Gentle gusts of evening wind
painted the air
with shades of green and yellow
with a dash of dust and fading light.

Dark corridors of yesteryear
lead us to the neat
glass and concrete
A well laid out library of silence
to harvest ideas
that mesmerise and impel us
to walk their way.

The thrill of discovery
is intoxicating.
The heady times of
liberating ideas
the mushy smell of old books.

The southern end
the closed grille
the evening sky
the half hidden
long and lazy street lamp
and it's oozing fluorescence.

The sudden wind
and stormy petals of yellow
that caress my face
and stealthily settle on the open book.

December 1977

[Mr. Baldev Samantaray was a Probationary Officer in UCO Bank. He was the State Head of Odisha from 2014 to 2016. And superannuated as the General Manger UCO Bank in 2018. He started writing poems in the departmental wall magazine *Phoenix*.]

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Political Cartooning through English Literature: a sojourn into uncharted waters

Mr. Paresh Nath
M.A.: 1983-85

It was the year 1983 when I joined the Department of English of the Ravenshaw college for my post-graduation courses. Being a student of a legendary institution there was a sense of fear and excitement which became a turning point in my career and future course of action. Soon I enjoyed the classes.

Through the magical words of our ace lecturers and professors we were on flights of fancy into British countryside, poetic mood, Wordsworth, Globe theatre, London bridge, drama, D. H. Lawrence novels and prose... We were fortunate enough to be taught by the veterans – most of them being eminent contemporary poets, dramatists, columnists who were inspiration to us. Professor and poet Bhagaban Jai Singh, Bibhu Padhi, dramatist Dr. Ramesh Panigrahi, writer and columnist Frederick Wright – to name a few enthused us with their creative writings.

After a few months I was assigned to work for the department's Wall magazine (Phoenix?) – with colourful calligraphy of poems by students and teaching faculty. As drawing art and cartoons was my inborn quality, I too added a cartoon to it. Frederick Sir, who taught us Eliot's ***The Waste Land*** was my mentor and encouraged me a lot. In our English department's drama "All is well that mends well" I too did participate.

Frederick Sir introduced me into Dr. H. K. Mahtab's regional daily ***The Eastern Times*** wherein I drew a few political cartoons and made calligraphy of Christmas carols. In the meantime, I too was sending cartoons to the popular weekly tabloids like R. K. Karanjia's ***BLITZ*** and ***Current*** published from Bombay.

One day Economics Prof. Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra visited our department and was delighted to view the Wall magazine. She met me and later introduced me in ***The Samaja***, the premier Oriya daily after my MA exams in 1985. The newspaper's veteran and octogenarian Editor Dr. Radhanath Rath asked me to start daily pocket cartoons for its front page. Soon I was appointed as Cartoonist-cum-Sub-Editor. I stepped into the media world. Apart from drawing cartoons I was subbing the agency news, writing features and articles.

I was experimenting with Jonathan Swift's satire in my work and soon was able to study the people's pulse of Odisha. The big cartoons became popular and there was a craze among the younger generation. I viewed cartoons as "pictorial satire" or "Editorial in picture" and injected wit, irony and humour into them to make them persuasive or punitive.

Afterwards I freelanced for ***Indian Express*** under the Editorship of Arun Shourie. During Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Panchayat raj policies it had published my cartoon depicting Rajiv with a fishing rod and a ballot box with 'Back to villages' inscribed on it. In the speech balloon I put the famous line of Robert Frost with a twist: "I've miles to go before I **SLIP**!" It was popular. Soon I got a call from Mr. Rameswar Thakur, the Chairman of ***National Herald*** newspaper saying, "Rajiv Gandhi likes your cartoons... would you like to join our newspaper?" Mr. Thakur interviewed me and I was in the job. Afterwards Mr. Thakur became the Hon'ble Governor of Odisha.

I love to take most of my ideas from English and American literature. However, my aim was to make the Indian cartoons reach global newspapers. I did a lot of research and when I tried to introduce the elements, I received the U. N. awards for best political cartoons from the New York headquarters in the years 2000 and 2001. Some American Feature companies like New York Times Syndicate and Cagle Cartoons syndicated my work for worldwide circulation. Soon on global cartoons, I was catering to the foreign Editors and got published in the leading newspapers of the world like ***Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, TIME, Newsweek, Bloomberg Business week, The Guardian, Observer, Le Monde, Japan Times*** etc.

After ***the Herald*** I've been working for ***The Khaleej Times*** of Dubai and ***The Cyprus Mail*** of Cyprus and get published in more than hundred countries. Worldwide recognition, French Knighthood honour ***'Le Chevalier',*** awards, felicitations came on the way but I've always remained a Ravenshawvian in the core of my heart and still remember the classes of our English department. Whenever in doubt, I delve deep into the pages of Shakespearean quotes and come out with key words!

My aim through the cartoon is to educate the people about the political and social changes taking place in the society, to bring out the weakness and inconsistencies in the pronouncement of world leaders as compared to the high principles to which they profess, amuse the reader by bringing out the incongruities in various aspects of life.

I entertain the viewers with my virtual gallery: pareshcartoons.com.

I feel proud of my alma mater and its glorious legacy which teaches me – "That is your legacy on this earth when you leave this earth: how many hearts you touched."

The teaching inspires me to go on and on ...

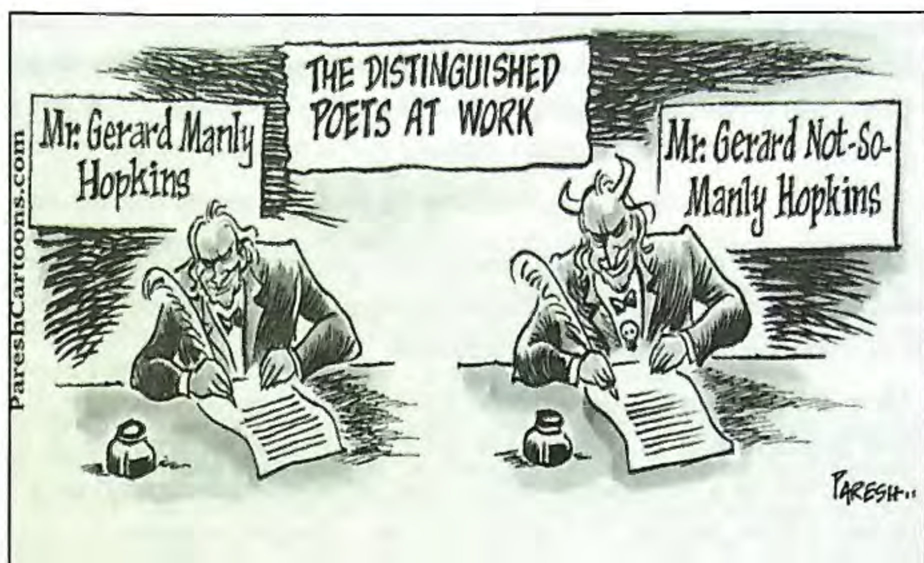
[Mr. Paresh Nath is an internationally acclaimed Cartoonist, mostly in the subjects of World Politics, History, Economy, Business, Trade, Development, Environment, Foreign Policy and India & International Relations preaching goodwill, friendship and universal brotherhood.]



(University Wits)



(Shakespearean Dilemma)



(Poets at Work)



(Godot Airlines)

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Reminiscences of My Alma Mater

Dr. Hrudaya Ranjan Satapathy
B.A.: 1974-76

I feel proud and privileged to be a part of the centenary celebrations of the English department of Ravenshaw College. It is heartening to note that this department has the heritage of over hundred years of enlightenment.

How did I land in this department? My hometown is Koraput, a small town in the remote Southern part of Odisha. My elder brother had a friend Mr. P. Shankar, serving as a clerk in a government office who had a strong command over English language and a great passion for English literature. He used to inspire me saying that English is a royal subject and its literature is worldwide. Moreover, my English teacher in primary school and high school used to command awe and respect because of their proficiency in English language. Then my English teachers in the intermediate class introduced to me to the beauty and depth of this language. Since then I nursed a strong ambition to pursue English Honours in the only premier College of our time, that is Ravenshaw College, and to become an English lecturer.

When I topped the intermediate class of my college, all my English teachers along with the then Principal also encouraged me to join this premier institution. When I got the intimation to join this college, I was thrilled. With great hope and ambition when I arrived at the campus along with my elder brother, I was amazed at the sight of the huge campus, the magnificence of the redstone coloured building and the green lawns. I had never seen such a huge institution and initially felt at a loss how to study here. To my discomfort I couldn't get a seat in the hostel adjacent to the campus and had to adjust myself in a private hostel, a little far away from the campus which added to my woes.

But the day when I got a seat in the East Hostel, my joy knew no bounds. Here I met my English Honours classmates, apart from many other friends from different departments. My true education started here. I started attending English Honours class, which was then located on the second floor of the new Commerce building, along with my hostel mates Aditya Rath, Rabi Acharya, Bishnu Rath and Sudhansu Patnaik. I was

pleasantly surprised to see in my class Sarita Samal, one of my classmates in the intermediate days at Koraput. In course of time, I met my friends Ashok Patnaik, Nirakar Chand, Samsher Ali, Sobhan Das from West Hostel and day scholars like Satya Mohanty, Krushna Bal, Rishi Agarwal, Pradipta Swain, Ramakant Mohanty to name only a few though I am in touch with most of my honours mates till date.

I was amazed to see a galaxy of brilliant teachers like Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, Prof. Paresh Rout, Prof. Md. Fakruddin, Prof. M. Q. Khan, Prof. D. K. Roy, Prof. R. N. Panda, Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra, Prof. S. Mishra under whose tutelage I had the privilege to shape my dream of becoming an English Lecturer which I did become after my post-graduation in English and pursued this career till my superannuation.

My memory is very green of some of my English Honours class like Modern Poetry by Prof. Sarbeswar Dash, Critical Appreciation of Poetry by Prof. Paresh Rout, *Macbeth* by Prof. Fakruddin, *All for Love* by Prof. M. Q. Khan, Criticism by Prof. B. J. B. Mohapatra and Prof. R. N. Panda, *Queen Victoria* by Prof. D. K. Roy who have really set my foundation of English literature, how to understand and enjoy the subject. For the first time I came to learn about the popular terms like Tragedy and Comedy, Romanticism and Classicism, Rhyme and Rhythm etc which sowed the seeds of my understanding of literature which encouraged me to venture into creative writing in my later life.

For me, every day of my stay in the campus is memorable, which has enriched my life by the brilliance of great teachers, by the warmth of my Honours class mates, by the beacon of light of Kanika library and of course the sight of ever inspiring white clad Principal Prof. M. K. Rout.

Though my tenure in the department is briefly for two years, yet these two formative years of my life have been so enriching that if I am what I am today, it is because of these two memorable years of my life that I spent in this department which made me a part of the great heritage of English department of Ravenshaw College which has taught me:

"For men may come and men may go,

But I (my English department) go on forever."

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The Reminiscent Days of Ravenshaw

Mr. Dillip Kumar Mallick
M.A.: 1990-92

The Alumni Association of English Department, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack is going to celebrate its Centenary Celebration this year – 2022 in the coming days, which will be definitely a landmark milestone in the history of English Department, Ravenshaw University and educational scenario of Odisha Higher Education. Being an Ravenshawvian and more especially a working professional in the same faculty, made me more vigorous with fresh enthusiasm to dare to pen forward something about the Reminiscent golden days of my student career in the tallest edifice of the age old, historic educational Institution of Odisha. Undoubtedly in the long run, of hundred years, our Alma mater, with its department of English strove for lifelong learning, ensuring its students an academically stimulating learning environment.

Gone are those days when it was said, "Whoever in Orissa is someone or something... Must have been a Ravenshawvian". This maxim though seems lustreless in the present day due to so called modernization, liberalization and globalisation but for me it had a long-lasting impression on me during my yester years. My Chief Mentor-Cum-Teacher Sj. Umeshswar Dash who guided me in my schooling days, once told me to take English as my career. This great multitalented teacher who was also a Ravenshawvian, was instrumental in making the destiny of many underprivileged rural scholars of Baluria and Pattamundai block during the sixties. Upon his advice I joined the P.G. Department of English in early 1990's after graduation which was my long-awaited dream for years. After that rest is history......

Those were the days of political upheaval in social and educational life of India due to Mandal and Kamandal in politics. That caused a lot of devastation like present day Covid-19 to whole Indian educational system. But for the Department of English, of the then Ravenshaw College, it was perhaps the golden momentous moment for its students. The towering Prof. M.Q. Khan who was leading the department with his colleagues like saintly Prof. Dinesh Pattnaik, dynamic Prof. Sanat Das Pattnaik, Veteran Linguist Prof. Bijay Kumar Bal, Moralist Prof. Bijay Kumar Das, Prof. Papiya Ray,

Prof. O' Brien and many more others. They left their indelible mark of impression on the memory of their beloved students by the fragrance of their multitalented personalities.

On this great grand jubilation, on the eve of this historic centenary celebration, I do express my gratitude and best wishes to those most revered present and past teachers of this royal department, students and staff. I hope and wish to take forward the glory and legacy of this department to the pinnacle of success by our posterior.

It would be little bit injustice to Manu Bhai, our department care taker, who was once the ear and nose of our esteemed department. He was a man of simplicity and ever ready nature for the teachers and taught. Those were the days of hardship in many ways. Most of us came from different families and economic background. We have struggled in our own ways financially and economically and had many impediments. Sharing such experience, knowledge and understanding to our posterior in a loving and caring manner can be a valuable source of inspiration for their lives.

Whenever those days flashes back in the memory lane, it brings me back to 1990's Parija P.G. Hostel, Kanika Library, Bijaya and Malabar Hotel with so many related incidents and accidents of student life. My admission into Parija P.G. Hostel at the end moment was materialized because of my most revered teacher Prof. Bijay Kumar Bal, who was the superintendent and his timely help needs mention here. For this humane human help made me indebted forever. Another painful event was Mandal Commission strike which drew our two-year course to three years. That made all the difference to many career aspirants of that time.

Last but not the least was the guidance, scholarly attitude for helping the students by our most revered teacher made us bow before their multifaceted personalities in many ways. And now time has ripened enough, we should learn to repay our sacred debts like Matrupitru Rina, Rishi or Guru Rina, Deba Rina. Let us repay our debts with love and care, so that we can leave this mundane world happily seeing it in a much better condition than ever.

[Mr. Dillip Kumar Mallick currently works as a Lecturer, Kashinath Mahavidyalaya, Kaipada, Jajpur. He is a Poet and Feature Story Writer in Odia and English. In addition to his professional career, he has also been recognized by many institutions for his extraordinary commitment to socialistic activities and philanthropic enterprise.]

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Days in the Department

Dr. Khagendra Sethi
M.Phil.: 1996-97

A day in November 1996. Tikili, my little niece, came running to me with a post card to the paddy field where I was reaping. The letter came from Dr. Umesh Patri. It read, "Dear Khagendra, you will be delighted to know that I have been transferred to Ravenshaw College". My pleasure knew no bounds as I had already dropped him a post card stating about my selection to Ravenshaw College for admission into M.Phil. program. In the evening, I went to a PCO nearby and called him. He confirmed that he had received my letter on that very day. We eagerly waited for each other for a meeting in the department.

After a week we met in the department. Our relationship gained ground in subsequent days. Twelve students, including me, took admission to M.Phil. programme. We attended classes regularly. Dr.Harapriya Singh was the H.O.D. I wrote my dissertation under her supervision. There were many teachers in the Department. Almost all of them were distinguished teachers. When I peeped through the door to the Staff Common room, a sense of pride and satisfaction moved me for being a student of this great Department.

Time came for filling up the form. It posed a great problem for me. For filling up the form, original Board certificate was required. I had a postal admission that year. I was unable to collect the certificate from the department as I could not pay Rs.500/- for seminar fee. Dr. Ramesh Panigrahi was in charge of filling up the form. He didn't verify my form on the ground that the original certificate was wanting. I told him that the certificate was there in the department. But he refused to verify the same from the department and insisted me to pay Rs. 500/- (seminar fee) which I didn't have and couldn't manage to arrange. In spite of several requests he did not listen to me. I came from Balasore that morning and it was around 3pm when I was waiting outside Teachers' Common Room without having any food. I took the matter to Dinesh Pattnaik Sir. Umesh Patri Sir had introduced me to him. I told him about my problem and he requested Ramesh Sir to help me. But he didn't. Then Dinesh Sir himself got my form verified in

his (Ramesh Sir's) presence. My intention is not to tell against anyone, but to say that good teachers are available all the time who help the students out in their crisis.

On another incident, I got qualified for OPSC Main exam for the post of Junior Lecturer. The date for viva-voce clashed with one of the dates of M. Phil examinations. I was in great dilemma. Dr. Patri advised me to meet the Principal to change the date of exam. To my surprise and good luck, I found Professor Priyatama Deo, the Principal, in the staff common room of the Department of English. The moment she came out I told her about my problem. She told me, "I cannot change the date, let OPSC change it." I felt that my problem mounted up. She added, "I'll write a letter to the Chairman of OPSC in this regard. Meet me after 30 minutes." Just after 30 minutes I went to her Chamber. But the peon standing in front of the door of the Principal's Chamber made me wait for one hour and didn't allow me to meet her. Teachers were getting in and coming out of the Chamber. I waited and waited. Finding no other way out I sneaked into the Chamber finding the peon otherwise busy. When I got in, the Principal Madam asked me, "Why are you so late?" She handed over to me the already typed letter and told me, "Give it to the Chairman of OPSC. I have already talked to him and he will change the date". I met the Chairman and he changed the date for my viva. Even today I wonder when I think about the power and position the Principal enjoyed at that time.

I joined S. M. Government Women's College, Phulbani, Kandhamal in July 1999. It was far away from my home town and its climate was very cold. So, I could not feel at home with that place. Hence I thought of a transfer from that college to any college in coastal area, I meant Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, etc. I never thought of being transferred to Ravenshaw college. I sent representations for eight years out of my ten years of stay at Phulbani. I spent eight summer vacations in the Odisha Secretariat pursuing my file for transfer. All efforts went in vain. In early 2009 Ravenshaw University advertised its posts for English. I was selected for the post of Lecturer in English. It was beyond my imagination. I joined here on 23.12.2009.

In a mass recruitment one Professor, four Readers and three Lecturers joined the Department as the first recruits of the University. I was one among them. Professor D. R. Pattnaik joined as Professor. The Readers were Dr. S. Pani, Dr. M. Pati, Dr. S. P. Das and Dr. M. Mohanty. Along with me Dr.Aloka Patel and Dr. S. Panigrahi joined as Lecturers. At that time Manu bhai and Ananta were the support staff of the department. The department as a family ran smoothly. Days passed. Years passed. Rotation for headship came into force. Dr. Sushmita Pani was supposed to be the next Head. But she

waived her right to Dr. M. Pati. Dr. Pani's decision was a setback to all the members. The pace of the department took a different turn. Subsequently CAS promotion for the teachers got due in different departments. There was a move to get the notification out. Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty worked hard for it. It involved a lot of enterprise like preparing requisite papers for the University and getting permission from the Government. Finally all the departments went for CAS promotion. All were promoted, but Dr. Mohanty was deprived of the promotion. It was because of his frank and fearless views on different issues. Dr. Mohanty was not only a high-class teacher but also a towering personality of morality and integrity. His commitment for the department or for any other matter is really commendable. He got deprived of his dues. But he is not the man to give in. And what followed next is history. The University knows and so does the Government of Odisha. The department has not yet come out of its quagmire till today. But I expect with robust optimism that such practice will not be followed by our present esteemed faculties in future. We will work together, forgetting personal differences, for a "Cause". The "Cause" is the "Department". We will take the department to a new height and retain its past glory.

Pursuing career as a scholar and a teacher in Ravenshaw is really special to me. I was benefitted by the knowledge and wisdom of teachers of my time. I am indebted to Dr. Harapriya Singh, my supervisor, I also owe a lot to Mr. Dinesh Pattnaik, Dr. Umesh Patri, Dr. Rashmi Mishra, Dr. Debapriya Das, Dr. Suman Mohapatra, Dr.SarbeswarSamal, Arun Kumar Mohanty. The stature of these great teachers with exceptional humanity and integrity has continued to inspire me in every walk of my life.

As a teacher of the department, I have tried my best to take care of the students and the scholars. I have come across serious problems of different students. I have helped them to solve their crisis as far as practicable. I have watched their shining and smiling faces when they call on me after finding their placements. It has given me immense pleasure and has inspired me to do everything positive for the students as well as the Department.

Professor Prafulla C. Kar, an eminent name in the field of research, visited the department in the fag end of 2019. He told us that the department would complete 100 years in 2022 and for that the department should prepare plan for the Centenary Celebration as soon as possible. I took charge of the department as Co-ordinator on 20 February 2020. I, along with my two colleagues passed a proposal for it in the Staff

Council meeting for celebration of this mega event. We invited the esteemed members of the Alumni and put the agenda before them. The Organizing Committee for centenary celebration was formed. The Committee met the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Sanjay Kumar Nayak and requested him to be the Patron of the Committee. He assured us of all co-operation from his side. The Committee geared up in full speed to celebrate it in the month of January 2022. However, it was not possible to organize it at that time. Now everything is all set to hold the event on 03 September 2022 under the leadership of Professor SambitPanigrahi.

People will come and people will go but the Department, the brainchild of the Queen of the then Sonepur, will continue to exist like a Red Fort and guide them from generation to generation.

[Dr. Khagendra Sethi is an academician who is currently working as the Associate Professor, Department of English, Ravenshaw University. Dr. Sethi has published four books and 37 articles in different journals. His specialisation is American Literature and the area of interest is Dalit Literature.]

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Mates, Mentors and Memories

(In fond memory and 100 years of glorious existence of the Department of English, Ravenshaw University)

Ms. Meenakshi Duarah
PG: 1995-97

The Fond Reminiscences:

The very name 'Ravenshaw' evokes a feeling of pride and honour in me. Nostalgia abounds. The six years that I had spent in Odisha, four in Bhubaneswar at the Regional Institute of Education and another two in Ravenshaw, have made me create wonderful memories to treasure and cherish.

Sometimes it's not just the people we miss, but the feelings, moments and memories we have had with them. Some memories are hard to erase out; they are unforgettable- remaining ever vivid in our memory and gratifying as well.

Well, after completing my four-year integrated course of B.A.B.Ed. with Honours in English at the reputed Regional Institute of Education in the year 1995, I considered myself fortunate to get admitted in the prestigious Ravenshaw University (the Ravenshaw College then), which has the oldest English department, to do my Masters in English in the year 1995. The two years of my studentship in Ravenshaw were spent under the valuable guidance of literary luminaries and in the company of heart-warming friends.

I had gone to RIE - Bhubaneswar all the way from the north-eastern state of Assam and subsequently had got admitted in Ravenshaw for my higher studies. Although my stay in Ravenshaw was only for two years, with amiable friends and professors who were just like second parents, I hadn't realised then that beautiful memories were in the making which have remained an indelible part of my life till date. I have only 'feel-good' memories of my Ravenshaw days.

There were so many apprehensions which kept lurking as I had got ready to embark on a journey at the university stage in Ravenshaw- fear of rejection in a different land with cultural differences, ragging by seniors, new teachers, a new ambience and so on. However, my journey into Ravenshaw was marked by a warm welcome with open arms, both in the P.G. Girls' hostel and the department as well. Although I was the only student from Assam (Guwahati), to my utmost delight, the kind and considerate

ways of my batch-mates, hostel mates including my seniors and my 'gurus- the erudite professors'- all made me feel at home.

The grand old brick-coloured building of Ravenshaw, bearing the weight of colonial heritage, the tall enormous doors of the classrooms, a sprawling campus with a green foliage, students and professors moving around the huge campus pulsating with academically vibrant environs, a well-stocked library, the seminar library in the department itself- the institution had everything to fulfil the aspirations of anyone with academic pursuits and broaden one's horizon of knowledge. The memory of having been chosen the 'Miss Fresher' at the Freshers' Social, both in the hostel and the department still remains vivid in my memory and I have preserved the sashes with the words 'Miss Fresher' till date. In the Freshers' Social organised in the department by our then seniors, I remember my batch-mate Sanjeev Mohanty receiving the 'Master Fresher' title.

My Mentors - The Intellectual Influencers... The Literary Luminaries...

During my days at Ravenshaw, it was my good fortune to have come in association of literary gems like Dr. Rashmi Mishra, Dr. Suman Mahapatra, Dr.Tarak Kumar Pramanik, Dr. Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi and so on. Back then, we lived in a world without Internet, without dish and cable TV and above all, without mobile phones. Consequently, we had no access to things like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and so on. That was a time untarnished by technology. Yet, we were so closely associated with our facilitators, our guiding lights and mentors. I feel so blessed to have the aforesaid mentors who guided us, encouraged us, motivated us and propelled us to paths of success. They helped us to discover a new reserve of enthusiasm and energy. They made us explore and discover and subsequently, develop a passion for learning more about literature and delving deeper into its various realms.

I still fondly reminisce Tarak Kumar Pramanik Sir and Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi Sir, always addressing me so lovingly as 'maa' and strongly advising me to go for a Ph.D. after my post-graduation. Their classes were so interesting, enriching and engaging. I feel so fortunate that both Ramesh Panigrahi Sir and Tarak Pramanik Sir remained in touch with me for many years after I had left Ravenshaw. In fact, TarakPramanik Sir still remains in touch with me, texting me and also calling me up.

Rashmi Mishra Madam was an epitome of beauty and brain. She taught us the poetry of P. B. Shelley. Her organisational skills were highly admirable. Madam being the hostel Warden also, I often got opportunities to talk with her on various topics. I

still remember getting huge appreciation from her for the speech I had prepared to deliver as the Assistant General Secretary at the P.G. Girls' hostel's annual function. I remember Suman Mahapatra Sir as a very cool person with a dignified demeanour and he was an excellent teacher while teaching us the Shakespearean plays. Memory of the classes of Sir Dinesh Patnaik are also still fresh in my memory. Bijoy Kumar Bal Sir's classes on Wordsworth's poetry really transported us to places like Tintern Abbey and the world of Lucy Gray.

The very mention of 'The Canterbury Tales' reminds me of Ramona Israel Madam, whose constant sweet smile while teaching us Chaucer always infused in us a spirit of joy and cheer. Our other professors, Sarbeswar Samal Sir and Gangadhar Mishra Sir were also immensely dedicated and devoted to their profession of imparting knowledge to us. I remain eternally grateful to each of my professors. Whatever success I have achieved in my career or profession until now, I owe a great deal to my professors at Ravenshaw's Department of English.

In all of my professors, I had found the passion to share their knowledge with us to enrich our understanding and thereby, create a vibrant knowledge community. They all had that acumen to identify our strengths and gave us the much-needed push to go beyond the limits we conceived. They taught us to work on our shortcomings, in a highly encouraging manner, be it in the class, seminar library or even beyond regular class hours.

The Hostel- A Home Away From Home

Hostel life is another thing that I loved about my days in Ravenshaw. I miss the spontaneity of life in the hostel. There was so much to do and celebrate. Despite the surveillance and discipline in the P.G. Girls' hostel, hostel life was characterised by a lot of fun and frolic. Living in the hostel was like living in an extended family. In my first year, I had got very caring and affectionate seniors in Manu Di, Tuku Di, Usha Di and Shelly Di. Somehow, my senior room-mates showered a lot of love and care upon me as I had been there all the way from Guwahati, Assam. They always took care to ensure that I never felt out of place in the hostel. In the second year, I had Chinmoyee and Kshama as my room-mates and we had a lovely camaraderie as roomies.

I remember taking a lot of lead and load in hostel affairs as its Assistant General Secretary in the first year under the guidance of my senior and General Secretary Sumitra di and as the General Secretary in the second year, with the active support of my batch-

mates. I also remember going out of the hostel early in the morning almost every Friday with my friend Shanta and few others to check the posters of the latest films pasted on the public walls and then flattering the hostel supervisors Sana mausi and Uttambhaina to give special allowance to our friends' circle for movie shows. I also vividly remember going to the nearby PCOs to make calls home as there was just one landline phone in the hostel, around which, there always would be long serpentine queues. Managing the mess in turns and organising the celebration of Saraswati Puja and Ganesh Puja were opportunities to exhibit our organisational and event management skills. On the whole, hostel life taught us all the essential life skills needed to survive in the macrocosmic world beyond the confines of the comfort zone of our homes. Hostel life was all about caring and sharing for me.

The Heart-warming Friends - The Fun Factor

It is said, 'Good friends care for each other, close friends understand each other but true friends stay forever, beyond words, beyond distance and beyond time." Living with peers hailing from different backgrounds and academic courses had paved a way for me to exchange and share knowledge and ideas on a wide range of topics. I still remember my friends Sudeepa, Shanta, Pushpamitra, Monalisha and so on, from the department of Hindi, Gayatri from the department of Economics.... and thankfully, even after 25 years of physical separation, we are still in touch with each other. My batch-mates were all true-blue friends - be it Sangita, Tapan, Shekhar, Saroj, Paromita, Palash, Priyambada, Madhumita, Ranjeet, Nimisha, Sanjeeb and the list goes on......they were not only supportive but exuded warmth. Thankfully, they are still in touch with me. From my department, I also remember Sanghamitra, Bishnupriya, Susangita, Bedprakash, Bibhu, Kamalika and many more. The friends I had found in Ravenshaw had not only eyes to see and ears to listen but pure hearts to feel.

Reliving the Memories after Twenty-Five Years.... The Fab Times....

I still have those fabulous memories of having 'gup-chup/puchka' with the entire gang of friends during free periods, the impromptu outings with them, enjoying the 'first day first shows' with friends from my department and others as well, my regular visits to the Seminar library of the department with my friend Priyambada, participating in various literary competitions and winning prizes. The annual picnic organised under the aegis of the department was not only a welcome relief from the load of academics for a day but it gave us enormous opportunities to create memories for a lifetime.

The frequent weekend visits to Puri are still fresh in my memory. Not able to figure out now as to how many visits, I, Paromita and Kamalika had made to Madhumita's parental home in Puri. The visit to the holy abode of Jagannath, still reminds me of the fresh ethereal smell of the Mahaprasad served in the temple. The sojourns to the Puri beach are just unforgettable- witnessing and enjoying the phenomenal sight of the sunset or sunrise, mesmerising sights to behold, at the long sandy beach, the crashing of perfect waves of the roaring sea lashing against the unrelenting shore.... Oh! The place exudes pure majesty and a kind of wild magnetism. Food experiences of ethnic Odia cuisines at Madhumita's place, so lovingly prepared by her mother for all of us, are effectual in prompting my remembrance to her place and Puri. And these all happened because I was at Ravenshaw!

Truly and Highly Enriched by the Ravenshaw Experience......

Post-Ravenshaw days took us to radically different directions and we have not been able to see each other for over two decades now. Yet, distance has not been able to part us as most of us are still in touch although we do not get to meet each other physically, thanks to the technology-driven world. Reconnecting with old friends is so fulfilling and enriching. With the passage of time, our paths have changed but the bond of friendship among us has remained strong and our lives being enriched by the Department of English, Ravenshaw University, shall remain a fact for all times to come. Whatever we are and wherever we are today, the department deserves a copious amount of credit.

On the occasion of the centenary celebration of the Department of English, I wish the department many more years of glorious existence, enriching the lives of many students and chiselling them into assets to the society.

Long Live the Department of English, Long Live Ravenshaw University !

[Ms. Meenakshi Duarahis a academician who is currently the Headmistress & Chief Co-ordinator, Department of Languages, Delhi Public School, ONGC, Nazira, Assam.]



The Golden Reminiscences

Dr. Pragyan Prabartika Dash
M.A.: 2000-02, Ph.D.: 2007-12

Ravenshaw University always brings a nostalgic feeling to me. And obviously the Department of English. It has groomed me as a poet and a thinker. I am still thrilled when I remember winning the first prize in poetry-writing in my P.G. I was there for my P.G. for the session 2000-2002. But the charishma of the department made me obsessed with it till the days of my Ph.D. during 2010-2012. I am highly indebted to my teachers Shri Dinesh Prasad Patnaik, the H.O.D. during that time; Dr. Ramesh Panigrahi, the great dramatist; Late Dr. Umesh Patri, the eminent writer; Late Shri SadhanParida, the most friendly teacher of that time; Dr.Bijay Kumar Bal, the famous grammarian; Dr.Bijay Kumar Das, the great critic; Dr. Indira Singh, the most beautiful madam; Shri Tapan Patnaik, the most fluent speaker; and last but not the least, Shri Chinmoy Jena, the eminent poet and the most lovable teacher of our department. I remember how my teachers tried to infuse the soul of literature inside us! Such eminent persons are our teachers.

I will always be indebted to my department for another reason. Here, I first met Prof. Manoj Das in person. I was a great fan of his writings, but had not met him yet. It was a seminar organized by us under the guidance of Bijay Sir, where Manoj Das came as the guest speaker. I got the chance to meet him there, and realized how sublime a great man could be! My entire vision changed. We were all mesmerised that day during his speech, and I am under that charm till today. I became intimate with some friends in the department. What more can one expect from life!

I got refined during my Ph.D. work under the guidance of Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, who is always a hard-task master. I shall always be grateful to him for his Catholicism, for allowing me to choose my topic out of his field of specialisation. Though Sir has specialized in American Literature, he never forced me do research on that, seeing my inclination towards the Manojian literature. Many times, I was moved to mark him absorbed in my research work, day in and day out, adding excellence to it. When he found me tired and anxious, he used to say, "I know you are doing hard work but it will bring you a reward." Yes, I completed my arduous work in just two years due

to the hard work of my guide. Later my thesis "Magical Realism in the Fictional Works of Manoj Das" took the form of a co-authored book with him. He took the pain of publishing it with the prestigious publishing house, *Bloomsbury*, of international repute. Prof. Manoj Das highly praised the work, though first he fondly remarked, "So you are dealing with something, which the author himself is not aware of!" Yet, I take the pride to name him a magical realist with enough research. When I find scholars quoting lines from my articles and book, I feel how much I owe to my guide and my department.

Every time, I was looking at the wall-magazine of our department, I remember how desperately I wanted to be placed there. My writing picked up a speed there. If now I am an author of 20 books, that is because I am a Ravenshawvian. The journey from admission to convocation was magical. Now my department is going to celebrate its Centenary. How enthralled I am! I wish many more excellences to my department. May it groom more and more students till the end of time.

[Dr. Pragyan Prabartika Dash is a Lecturer in English, V.N. Autonomous College, Jajpur Road. She is the author of 12novels, 2story collections, 2poetry collections, 3criticism books and 5 academic books.Dr. Dash has been awarded with Rajadhani Book Fair Award, Byasa Gourav, Jajpur Book Fair Award etc.Many of her articles have been published in various Odia and English journals and magazines.]

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In Remembrance of Things Past

Dr. Alipta Jena
B.A.: 1999-01, M.A.: 2001-03, M.Phil.: 2004-05, Ph.D.: 2007-18

Ravenshaw, to me, is more than an institution - it is a tradition, something we aspired to, loved and we are always in awe of. From its sprawling acres to the aesthetic grounds, it holds more memories than just classes and studies.

Yes, Ravenshaw is a feeling, of inspiration from decades of scholars and dreamers who walked its corridors, and of hope of a glorious era in history.

I had heard of cricketing tales, of *addas* after class, of legendary teachers and principals and revolutionary students since childhood. From my grandfather, my father and uncles who had been fortunate enough to have been part of its august history.

Ravenshaw had steeped into my consciousness even before I had ever stepped onto its grounds and I knew some day or the other I would be part of its student roll.

Ravenshaw lives on as part of my consciousness as a series of images and sounds.

The imposing red building with its verdant lawn, the long roving walk to the English department flanked by decades of old trees stretching to the sky and the old gentleman with a tin box with the traditional bakery biscuits that satiated our hunger between classes.

One of my favourite memories was walking around to the back of the department to view the cricket field on an autumn afternoon reminiscent of the imagery in Robert Frost's "A Leaf Treader". In the rains, I often wandered lonely as a cloud among the open-air theatre and the quadrangle with its famous sun dial and the much beloved library.

In autumn, my favourite season, I confess letting my thoughts wander to the open fields and the gentle breeze and dappled sunshine outside the classroom. The myriad russet and copper hues, the inimitably clear sky and the bird songs drew me to write of my own thoughts.

In winter, all the poems I had read of the season came alive as I traversed its grounds with the leaves falling gently and carpeting the pathways. Much of my dreams

of being a writer originated among its many walks. For me, the quiet dignity of the University had something akin to the calm serenity of autumn. Never ostentatious but always majestic in its history and legacy.

Ravenshaw is also a sea of faces, some of whom distinctly stand out in my memory. One of the people I can never forget is the universal Manu Dada (Manu Bhai to others) who greeted me with a smile every time I went to him with a request.

From the gentle Joshi Sir to Kamala Sir's hearty greetings to the class to all the gentle admonitions we received for our various mischief. I remember with great respect all my teachers who encouraged us to explore the pages and the authors' minds and opened our eyes to the infinite possibilities of meaning contained therein.

Sadhan Sir's words to remain true to ourselves and to literature forever remain etched in my memory as words to live by. Chinmoy Sir's Chaucer to Purohit sir's American Literature took me through different times in history, and through each of their words, I connected to the characters in the poems and novels and dramas, assuring the introvert in me that No Man is an Island.

I came to associate so many works of literature in such a manner that I cannot think of those particular authors without thinking of my teachers and their insightful interpretations that took us back in time when travellers rode to Canterbury and spoke with word play. And when troubled young men looked back in anger or we delved into *The Heart of the Matter*.

And yes, Ravenshaw to me was a place for time travel. While physically present in the high ceilinged cool white classrooms, we travelled back in imagination to the hills and dales of England with Wordsworth, the recesses of Africa with Graham Greene, America to witness Gatsby's angst and dark nights when Shelley's soul wandered as high as a Skylark to sing of the saddest thoughts.

Now, with the passing of the years, I make it a point to take a tour of the grounds whenever I pass, in fond memory and remembrance of things past. Ravenshaw, you are respected, revered and remembered.

[Dr. Alipta Jena works as a Journalist with 15 years of experience at *The Telegraph*, Kolkata. She is the Founder of AllWrite (Digital Content Creator). Dr. Jena is also the Guest Faculty at Brainware University, Department of Media Science and Journalism. She is also a dancer, painter and avid traveller.]

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Reminiscences

Dr. Subash Chandra Pradhan
Ph.D. : 2011-2020

The campus of Ravenshaw University is a sacred place and so is the corridor of the Department of English. My association with the Department can be traced back to the year 2011 when I was intimated to have qualified in the entrance test to take admission into Ph.D. programme. I can never forget the excitement of that moment when I was communicated about my success. At the same time, I was a bit apprehensive of the two roles to be played by me - a Ph.D. scholar at Ravenshaw University, listening to the eminent teachers of the department; and a teacher of English for my students at a far-off place. The two roles I played convinced me that a teacher is always a learner.

I could remember the days when I used to wait outside the Staff Common Room of the Department to meet, discuss and be advised by the esteemed professors of the Department. I met my Supervisor Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, both an awe-inspiring tall figure and at the same time, very calm, soothing and scholar-friendly person. A few meetings with him helped me learn the procedures to make progress as a Ph.D. scholar. When the topic was finalised and was approved by the Departmental Research Committee, I was advised by my Supervisor to visit OUCIP Library (formerly American Studies Research Center) in Hyderabad for collection of materials on Thomas Paine.

A novel experience was awaiting me in the campus of OUCIP, Hyderabad. I reached there with my good friend, Santosh, who was also a Ph.D. scholar. We stayed there for around ten days and each day was a kind of new learning experience. I had not seen such a great library before. During the first few days, it was the SILENCE of the large halls filled with racks of books which frightened and made me very nervous. I could not understand where to start with. But a noble soul, Abdul Khayyum, Library-in-Charge helped me find relevant books for my research.

On my return, I showed the materials brought with me to my Supervisor who guided me to arrange them according to the chapters of the projected thesis and sat for working on them seriously. The huge task of reading, rereading, making relevant notes, writing, rewriting chapters, documenting sources and preparing citations on the suggestions of my Supervisor finally brought smiles on my face on 07.11.2019 while submitting my Ph.D. thesis. After waiting for another ten months, I appeared for online

defence of my Ph.D. thesis on 11.09.2020. My joys knew no bounds when I heard those few words from my external examiner: "I must Congratulate Mr Pradhan for doing a wonderful job and recommend that his Ph.D. thesis be published in book form as soon as possible so that the research carried out reaches the scholars, teachers ...".

Apart from receiving a Doctoral Degree from the Department of English, Ravenshaw University, I also got an opportunity to know many learned professors of the department besides my Supervisor Prof. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty. It would be unfair on my part not to acknowledge the advice, encouragement and help given to me from time to time by Prof. Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik, Prof. Subhra P. Das, Prof. SambitPanigrahi, Prof. Khagendra Sethi and Prof. GurudevMeher for the completion of the work. The wonderful memories of the Department of English shall live with me till the end of my life.

[Dr. Subash Chandra Pradhan is at present working as Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Government Autonomous College, Phulbani.]



Learning and Exploring Opportunities: An Anecdotal Evidence

Dr. Ashish Mohanty
Ph.D.: 2010-17

My university experiences thus far have been amazing. I have learned and experienced so many new things in such a short period of time, and it has gone by so fast. I am still discovering all the opportunities that university offered me. Ravenshaw University is a very welcoming place and from the first day I felt at home here. My association with the university dates back to the year 2009. My doctoral journey began immediately after my enrolment as a Ph.D. scholar in the year 2010 until the successful completion of my doctoral thesis and subsequently I was awarded with Ph.D. degree in English in the year 2017.

"A long time ago, people who sacrificed their sleep, family, food, laughter and other joys of life were called SAINTS, now they are called Ph.D. STUDENTS," said a humorous post that I came across on social media. Like all good humour, there is perhaps an element of truth in the statement, as most Ph.D. students would tell. A Ph.D. requires sacrifice. But it can also be an enriching, even delightful experience, as I have come to discover during my time as a Ph.D. student at the Department of English, Ravenshaw University. In this piece, I trace my journey from questioning my decision of joining a Ph.D. programme to reclaiming faith in my resolution, to illustrate what I have learnt from my experience.

What better place to start my research career than Ravenshaw University? But I was unaware of the exceptionally rigorous standards of education and research here, as I am sure would be the case in other eminent research institutes as well. I was thoroughly unprepared for the challenges in my path. At one point in time, I felt overburdened and troubling thoughts about my job which I gave up to pursue research started to surface in my mind.

Stuck in this quagmire of negative thoughts, I decided to share my concerns with my Supervisor Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty and other senior colleagues in the department of English. Their remarkable guidance taught me how to mould my Ph.D.

experience to suit my style of working and temperament. I also realised the importance of being more communicative about my issues and how to deal with them. Yet another significant lesson I learnt back then was about the art of choosing: I chose to seek help when it was required and I chose the right people to talk to. I made a well-informed decision this time, going around in the department, discussing the quality of professional and personal life the other Ph.D. scholars experienced. I then made a list of factors that were important to me and finally chose my mentor based on my research, Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, who was the teacher in English. I can proudly say today that for me it turned out to be a perfect match.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mentor, guide and philosopher Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, formerly Reader, Department of English, Ravenshaw University. I am privileged to work with Dr.Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, an amazing person, researcher, and academician! He has been extremely generous and helpful as supervisor throughout the programme. He is always kind and supportive to students and the students' future career developments. For Dr. Mohanty, the graduate students are not the persons to finish the tasks but more like the "life children". He is knowledgeable with abundant experience. He is always nice and behaves equally to students without showing authority. When students have trouble, no matter if it is related to their studies or life, once he knows, he is always there to provide help and support as much as he can. He always supports, helps and guides the students to be good for the world and to keep innovating in scientific research. From him, it can be clearly seen the perfect combination of teacher, researcher, supervisor, and wise, kind and humorous elder. It is great luck for me to be one of his scholars. Even before being my supervisor, he was an exceptional role model in work ethics and research methods. Most importantly, he was very supportive and enthusiastic about my progress academically and professionally. He made sure that I am being supported through each step of the way and to regain my self-worth and confidence. My sincere and heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to a great supervisor for providing me with the guidance and counsel I needed to succeed in the Ph.D. programme. He has been a great mentor in mapping my Ph.D. journey, advising on a research topic, connecting me with the resources I needed, being available and responding to my emails and questions. He is a doyen in my area of research interest and his wealth of experience has been the main driver of my programme. Dr. Mohanty is such a selfless person. He puts so much effort into making sure his scholars grow and thrive not just as researchers but as individuals. He is kind, respectful and patient with his students. He has such a positive attitude and his critiques are always constructive

and helpful. He is approachable, friendly and fun to be with. He cares about the wellbeing of his students and always makes his students feel confident. He absolutely has an amazing inspiring personality. His scholarly knowledge, inspirational leadership, invaluable experience, and innovative ideas never cease to amaze me. Huge "THANKS" to him for being such an amazing Teacher and such a wonderful person! His confidence in me and his kind words of encouragement have been a great source of strength for me. I am truly blessed to have such a remarkable supervisor and above all a great human being.

It is a while ago I did my Ph.D. in English. It was during 2010-2017 at Ravenshaw University and it was the best time in my life. I learnt lots of interesting and exciting new things, I met people who had the same or similar interest and I could do what I found most interesting. The ambience of the Department of English has provided me with opportunities to grow professionally – improve my communication skills, expand my knowledge base and learn to understand and critique various works of research. It also helped me understand the value of having mentors who are open to the idea of letting their scholars explore, both about their field of research and themselves. This, I believe, helps scholars find their own niche and in the process contribute to the growth of the research group as well. An encouraging and understanding mentor can go a long way in nurturing budding researchers. I have also come to realise that ownership of one's choices is as essential as making the right choices. My time at Department of English, Ravenshaw University made me more sensitive to the significance of asking my own questions. It took me quite some time to hone the skill of solving problems independently and this continues to be a work in progress. These experiences are making me more prepared to manage stress and anxiety, both of which are an integral part of the life of a Ph.D. student. There is no denying that the life of a Ph.D. student is filled with challenges. But it can also be the most rewarding phase of one's life. I can vouch that the Department of English of Ravenshaw University is a repository of inspiration to students and scholars.

[Dr. Ashish Mohanty, academician and administrator, has an MBA in human resources. A faculty of Garden City University and Lovely Professional University, he has authored research articles for many prestigious journals.]



A Tribute to my Second Home

Dr. Krishnaprada Dash
PG:2005-07, Ph.D.: 2012-21
Guest Faculty: 2013-14

Ravenshaw was not my first choice to complete my masters in English. But, destiny has been kind enough to get me admitted into the most iconic institution of Education and wisdom, Ravenshaw College.

I entered the P.G. Department of English in 2005 as a student. The glamour and the vivacity of the Red building were so heart-warming that I turned into a regular spectator and an earnest admirer of the Department, resulting in not bunking a single class. My Teachers were so inspiring that they used to make us visualise the *Daffodils* of Wordsworth, the *Gracian Urn* of Keats and the *Wasteland* of T. S. Eliot. The Alley that stretched towards my Department from the Department of Psychology always enthralled me.

As a student of literature, the Department has not only shaped the aesthetic aspects of my life but has enriched my Life skills.

The memories of a P.G. student and the Seminar Secretary are living things for me.

I still remember the moments spent with my friends.

I am blessed to have been guided by teachers like Prof. Rajanikanta Nayak, Prof. Amulya Kishore Purohit, Prof. Kamala Prasad Mohapatra, Prof. Bijoy Kumar Bal, Prof. Chinmoy Jena, Prof. Nandita Mohapatra and Prof. Sumitra Mishra whose love and affection have given so much that I feel the Department as my Second Home.

The journey from a P.G. student to a Ph.D. scholar paving the way to become the Guest Faculty of the Royal Department, teaching the students standing on the same podium where the great teachers used to teach, always gives me great contentment.

I am proud to address the Department of English as My Department which has given me such a revered Supervisor like Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, the perfectionist and the wonderful teacher who loves me with all his heart and has taught me the meaning not only of real success, but also of life as a father teaches a daughter.

The celebration of the hundred years of my Glorious Department has refreshed all my memories, from 2005, the year I joined as a P.G. student, till 2022.

I am indebted to the Department of English as it blessed me with my M.A. and Ph.D. degrees as well as my life partner. I wish my second home, my Department, to hold its glory till eternity and I will always boast of as a Ravenshawvian and a proud Alumnus of the royal P.G. Department of English.

[Dr. Krishnaprada Dash is an academician whose forte lies in Soft Skills and Accent Training. Her area of interest in research is Translation and Women Studies. She is also a poet.]

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Centenary Celebrations 2022: Reminiscences of an Octogenarian in 2072

Dr. Anshuman S. S. Mohanty
B.A.: 2003-05, PG: 2005-07, Ph.D.: 2014-22

Reminiscing the Centenary Celebrations of the Department of English, Ravenshaw University in 2072 creates an intense feeling of nostalgia. As I relive those moments within the confined cells of my mind, I do also lament for those who once lived. Fifty years ago, in 2022, together we celebrated and organised the Centenary Celebrations in a grand manner. Back then, I barely realised that time would pass so fast and I will become so old so soon.

It seems like a tale of another life but yes, in this life itself I was once young and energetic. I cannot remember exactly but the laminated certificates testify that during the very first decade of this century, I was a student of the Department of English of Ravenshaw Autonomous College which turned into a University in 2006. Thus, interestingly, for my MA in English I was enrolled into a College in 2005 but passed from the University in 2007 - being the first MA batch of the University.

Truth be told, I was not a great student as most of the time I was busy spending time with my friends, skipping the valuable lectures, attending N.C.C. camps, participating in annual drama competitions, and getting involved in college politics and various other issues which were remotely connected to learning English Literature. But thanks to my Father, a retired Clerk and an MA in Odia who later completed LLB, he studied and made some amazing notes for me. During my graduation days, Priyaranjan Das had been a great helping hand to me. I used to call him from my landline a couple of days before the examinations and he used to pass me all required information. Another helpful friend was Sushmita Patnaik, who used to teach me amazingly over telephone before the final year examinations. I faintly remember she had told me that she would teach me in the evening except during 8.00 pm to 8.30 pm, as during those days her favourite daily soap used to be telecast. Especially for them I could graduate with distinction. I also remember I had mentioned Sushmita that out of my entire percentage that I would secured, 50% credit would be go to her as she had explained me the chapters so well that almost all my doubts were cleared.

I guess, you are not getting bored with some narration of my personal life. I am old now, a retired educationist who taught over three decades and life after

superannuation has become dull and lethargic as I barely get an audience to listen to me.

Well, let's proceed with the topic – Centenary Celebrations 2022: Reminiscences of an Octogenarian.

It was a winter evening when I and my wife Dr. Krishnaprada Dash had been to our Ph.D. Supervisor's home. Both of our Guide was Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty who supervised us in completing our Ph.D.s. Then I was under huge pressure as I was about to submit my Ph.D. thesis. That evening Mrutyunjaya Sir told me that he had been offered the responsibility of the Convenor, Centenary Celebration Committee. He also conveyed that the Committee and its President Mr. Pradosh Chandra Mohanty were looking for a young person who would be made the Secretary.

After a couple of days, I was told that the Committee had decided to appoint me as the Secretary while my wife got a place in the Editorial Team which was headed by Mr. Dinesh Prasad Pattanayak, the person under whose guidance the Department celebrated the Platinum Jubilee. The other members in the Editorial Team were Mr. Chinmoy Jena, Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra and Dr. Shruti Das. And, after some days, Prof. Jatindra Kumar Nayak was assigned the responsibility of the Advisor, Centenary Celebration Committee. During the initial days Dr. Khagendra Sethi used to coordinate the meetings until Prof. Sambit Panigrahi took the charge of the Head, Department of English.

After getting two important positions, amid professional and academic challenges, I and Krishna started our endeavour to make the Centenary Celebration a big hit.

It was 2006 when I met Krishna for the first time in the Department of English. And, the Department picnic to Bhattarika in Winter made us attracted towards each other. We talked as if we knew each other for ages. Our relationship developed from friends to good friends to best friends and barely a year from attaining MA degree we got married. Thus, I owe to the Department not only intellectual enrichment but also the fulfilment of life.So, now that I have presented a micro narration of my relationship with Krishna, let me get back to our specific topic - the Centenary Celebrations.

Soon after getting involved in the process, we strove to make the Centenary Celebrations a big hit, thus we started calling elderly alumni. As there was no database, we had to generate link from those whom we knew. Talking to elderly people was simply amazing as we got the opportunity to talk to our teachers and their teachers too, who were once the iconic members of the Department.

In the process, I got an opportunity to interact and meet many alumni who had then superannuated. I still cherish those memories, the way they smiled, talked to me

affectionately. Amongst all, the most cherished moments were those when they put their palm over my head while I used to touch their feet with reverence (I wonder, these days why most of the youngsters are reluctant to follow such valued tradition – may be old people like me hold no worth to them).

Back in those days, when we were planning to organise the Centenary Celebrations and publishing the Centenary Souvenir was in the pipeline, I got an opportunity to spend some quality time with the elderly alumni. I still long for those memories.

I remember meeting Mr. Rajanikant Naik in his residence at Bidanasi, Cuttack. The place was not new to me as during my graduation days, I used to attend his tutorial classes along with some of my batch mates. Rajani Sir was the Secretary of the Alumni Association. Apart from being an alumnus of the department he was also a teacher there. He passed me many contact details. I must mention that he loved me and my wife dearly and paradoxically addressed me as his son and my wife as his daughter. I still treasure the moments that I spent with him.

I contacted many elderly people out of whom Mr. Mohinikant Mishra turned out to be a huge help. While we were trying hard to get the Souvenirs of the Golden Jubilee and the Platinum Jubilee, he claimed to have a copy of the Golden Jubilee. Mohini Sir lived near Ravi Talkies Square, Bhubaneswar, but the Souvenir was in Nayagarh where he had another house in which he had spent many years. He had been superannuated from Nayagarh Autonomous College as the Principal. I remember, it was a Winter Sunday morning when he, I and my wife along with my sixteen month old daughter started our journey to Nayagarh. On the way we visited the home of his teacher from Ravenshaw College, Nrusingha Sir, but could not meet him as he was bed-ridden due to old age. We then headed towards Mohini Sir's house at Nayagarh. As we approached nearer and nearer, my heart started palpitating at a much faster rate. And when he was searching for the Souvenir, I remember that I was under tremendous anxiety as I was disturbed with the thought that if he failed to find the Souvenir, then I would have to again try to figure out who else might have had a copy of that fifty year old document. But finally, by the grace of the Almighty, he found the copy, the cover of which was missing. I can still feel the delight that coverless, pale and old document offered me. Though old, it was extremely valuable.

Getting a copy of the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir was not that tough as Mrutyunjaya Sir had told me to collect the same from Dinesh Sir. I went to Dinesh Sir's house at Bidanasi, Cuttack on a Winter morning when he was sunbathing at the open space that lied between the main gate and the entrance of his home. Unlike the Golden Jubilee Souvenir, it had its cover. He handed me two copies and asked me to give one to Mrutyunjaya Sir and another to Jatin Sir. Later on, I met Dinesh Sir many times at his

home as he became the Editor in Chief of the Centenary Souvenir in the following days. I must mention that the Platinum Jubilee was organised when he was the HoD. One day when I had visited his place and we were discussing the celebration, he narrated me about the Platinum Jubilee and how people wanted to sponsor various things voluntarily during those days. But twenty-five years later, things changed drastically as we had to work hard to get sponsorship. During our discussions I remember he revealed that many times he had dreamt of Ravenshaw. From his narration, I understood how much he was involved with Ravenshaw and the Department of English.

Another elderly member was Mr. Chinmoy Jena who was not only my teacher but teacher-cum-friend to many of my teachers. He was dearly addressed as Chinu Sir or Chinu Bhai by many. He was so famous by that dearly address that many did not even know his full name. Truth be told, many of us got to know his official name during those preparatory days of the Centenary Celebrations. As Chinu Sir was a member of the Editorial Board, I had to visit his house frequently. He lived at CDA, Cuttack. During those days, even though he was over seventy, still he was fit enough. And, the reason of his fitness perhaps lied in his past when he used to be a spectacular sportsperson. His soft voice that used to become even more melodious over telephonic calls still echo in my old ears whenever I think of him.

During my college days I was so much involved in college politics and hang outs that I used to return home late, very late – around midnight. My mother used to get worried about me and kept on calling me at regular intervals right from early evening. Oh my God! I deviate from the topic, perhaps digressing due to old age. I request you to ignore unnecessary and unintentional insertions of personal memories, if any.

I would like to share that during the process I also visited Dr. Gopa Ranjan Mishra at his residence at Vivekananda Marg, Bhubaneswar. He is a renowned poet and his poem "Fishing" was a part of intermediate syllabus. Gopa Sir had superannuated from J. K. B. K. Autonomous College, Cuttack as the Principal who later on became a member of the Editorial Team of the Centenary Souvenir. He handed me a rare copy of the Souvenir of All Orissa Association for English Studies on the occasion of its 3rd Annual Session which was held in the Department of English in 1984. Thus, the testimonial was ten years younger to the Golden Jubilee Souvenir and fifteen years older to the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir. Later on, I became quite close to Gopa Sir as we frequently communicated. Even though he was a retired educationist then, still he contacted many elderly alumni and requested them to submit their write ups for the Centenary Souvenir. I still remember his soft and genuine smile which barely deserted his face.

I must also dedicate some lines to Prof. Shruti Das. During those days she worked as the Professor and Head, P.G. Department of English, Berhampur University. She was

a member of the Editorial Board and that is how I came in her contact. I remember her as a bold lady who had the courage to get things done and most importantly, to air her views. During those days, she could not physically turn up quite often to Cuttack but upon requirement she was available for online meeting and telephonic discussions.

Mrutyunajaya Sir's friends Dr. Satyabrata Das and Mr. Hadibandhu Satpathy also helped me by sharing many contact details. After getting the leads, I contacted many as a result of which we got a good number of write-ups. Mr. Kishore Kumar Mohanty and Dr. Kamala Prasad Mohapatra were also deeply involved in the process. While Kishore Sir worked hard to get the sponsorship, Kamala Sir enthusiastically took care of the media coverage. During the Centenary Celebration if any batch had been the most actively involved in the process of organising the grand event, then it was the batch of 1976 with Mrutyunjaya Sir, Gopa Sir, Satyabrata Sir, Hadibandhu Sir, Kamala Sir and Kishore Sir working passionately even after passing out from the department around forty-six years ago. I remember, one evening I accompanied Mrutyunjaya Sir, Satya Sir and Gopa Sir to the home of Prof. Soubhagya Kumar Mishra. Soubhagya Sir was their teacher and a celebrated poet. As he was not well those days and was too old, he could not write anything. Hence, these three students of his decided to take an interview of him, of course in an informal manner, through conversation, so as to prepare a write-up on his behalf. It was a soothing experience to see my Ph.D. Supervisor and his friends taking interview of their teacher. I recorded the entire interview and returned home with a wonderful experience.

One of my memorable experiences was my Ph.D. During the preparation period of the Centenary Celebrations, I was awarded the Ph.D. degree from the Department of English. I am glad that from the very department I had also completed my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Those days were amazing when I used to bunk classes so as to hang out with friends. Even though I lived in Cuttack, still I had occupied a room at New P.G. Hostel as a hostel boarder in order to spend more time within the beautiful premises of my Alma Mater. Wait, hold on, I guess I messed up again. Much apologies for that. Let me get back to the topic with the hope that you have started ignoring such superfluous insertions.

Proceeding further, I must mention that the President of the Alumni Association and the Centenary Celebration Committee was Mr. Pradosh Chandra Mohanty. Through his profound zeal and keen interest, the Alumni Association of the Department of English substantially contributed to the success of the Centenary Celebrations. With his initiative as the President of the Alumni Association, a classroom had already been converted into a Smart Classroom with all modern amenities.

Another alumnus was Prof. Jatindra Kumar Nayak who was also the Adviser of the Centenary Celebration Committee. During those days he used to be a leading translator with great expertise in the subject. For the Centenary Celebrations he offered many suggestions and, in the process, I got an opportunity to interact with him. Couple of times I visited his study room at IRC Village, Bhubaneswar regarding the Centenary Celebrations. Once it so happened that we were discussing the celebration when the topic shifted to Ravenshaw. He then started reminiscing the old days and was full of admiration for Ravenshaw. As he had been to England for his study and research and had spent times at the Oxford and the Cambridge Universities, he started comparing those iconic universities to Ravenshaw and concluded by declaring Ravenshaw to be the champion. According to him the tradition and emotion of being a Ravenshawvian is heavenly. I agreed to it then and still I agree to it. All throughout his narration I could realise his enormous love for his Alma Mater – Ravenshaw. Only a true and passionate admirer can make such comparison and conclusion.

As I look back to those days, I cannot forget some elderly people like Dr. Papiya Ray and Dr. Rashmi Mishra who were extremely caring towards me.I remember vivacious voice of Papiya Ma'am turning soft towards me while soothing voice of Rashmi Ma'am turning melodious towards me. They were undoubtedly motherly figures to me. Simultaneously, I also remember the then M.A. student Padmaja Mishra and B.A. student Subhranshu Dash who helped me in typing some essential documents.

Before I conclude, I must mention that my Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty was a man of perfection. He was dearly loved by the students. In September 2015 the UG and P.G. students collaborated to organise a grand farewell in honour of Mrutyunjaya Sir on his superannuation from service. Many teachers get farewell, but his was something which many would envy. And he deserved it. I clearly remember an evening, couple of months prior to his superannuation, when I and my wife Krishna were at his home. It was around 8 pm when he asked for leave. Upon enquiring what made him to leave so early, he replied that though he had read and organised himself for the next day's classes, yet he needed to re-rehearse for those classes. I smiled and expressed wonder for I knew that even different research scholars used to attend his classes. To my smile and wonder, he stated that if he would stop rehearsing then how could he perform better than his previous performance. His answer left me speechless. Such was his approach towards life. He always tried to give his best to everything he used to get involved in. He never aspired for any post or position or power, rather tried to shun away from them, but worked indefatigably for the success of the Centenary Celebrations, not simply with the works assigned to him, but on all fronts. I must mention that it was just a month left for the Centenary Celebration when Prof. Sambit Panigrahi

replaced him as the Convenor, but this did not make any difference in his zeal towards the Centenary Celebrations; rather until the D Day he worked meticulously till late hours. The success of the Centenary Celebrations owes a lot to his efforts. With his initiative sponsorship for an amount of about 1 lakh 50 thousand was arranged for the Centenary Celebration. I must also mention that his dedication to teaching; penchant against corruption; indomitable zeal to establish justice; untiring enthusiasm, patience and hard work to achieve the goal; and his love of humanity not only set him apart from others, but are also worthy of praise and emulation.

During the entire process of the Centenary Celebrations many alumni came forward and donated towards the Alumni Association fund while the VC sanctioned a sum of rupees ten lakhs for the Centenary Celebrations. The Department which badly required renovation got its due and after a decade looked new and enchanting.We had tried to conduct a three or two days event but had to settle with one – 03 September 2022 being the date (generally I am not amongst those who remember dates but Centenary Celebration still remains fresh in my old heart). Former CJI Dipak Mishra and Dr. Yasodhara Mishra graced the event as the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour respectively while many senior alumni participated in it. On that day, I felt nostalgic as well as young upon meeting many seniors, batchmates and juniors after many years.We had started the preparations for the Centenary Celebrations from December 2021. Together we conducted the event. While many applauded us for organising so well, few had certain complaints – we accepted all. During the process of preparation each member worked hard, may it be the elderly alumni or the then students and teachers from the department or the non-teaching staff – all worked hard at their own capacities and as one, so as to make the Centenary Celebrations as it must have been. By the by, I must also mention that every great event is a product of long discussions, loud arguments and diligent team work and we experienced all these. We had many official and unofficial, large and small meetings; dissent on views; and togetherness at the end. After all, all was well that ended well.

Those days – those days are long gone. Though fifty years have passed, still those memories cheer my old mind as well as of those who still live. Now, when I recall those days, I wish if I could relive those moments again – if I could be young again – if I could meet those wonderful people again. But time never goes back, only memories do.

Well, I must apologise for drenching you with my wavering narration but I still think that you should acknowledge me for still remembering those names and incidents without whom the Centenary Celebrations would never have been a success.

[Dr. Anshuman S. S. Mohanty is an academician whose forte lies in Soft Skills and Accent Training. He area of interest in research is Novels into Films. He is also an actor and dancer.] □

My Alma Mater, My Ravenshaw

Dr. Aditi Chatterjee
B.A.: 2003-06, M.A.: 2006-08, Ph.D.: 2012-20

Ravenshaw College has been the landmark for the small and almost easily overlooked town of Cuttack ever since it was established in the year 1868. The English Department is one of the oldest departments of Ravenshaw University and boasts of prestigious alumni. I am proud and grateful to be a student of the Ravenshaw English Department. The Department has always been headed by visionaries. The curriculum has been so designed to help students from different backgrounds to help ace their English-speaking skill and understanding ability. But care was always taken to make them very interesting and enjoyable, and texts were brought in with the aim of making contemporary issues accessible. But that was for General English. For students like me, who had chosen English as their core subject, the connection with the department was much more intimate and aimed at making us aware of the different trends of English Literature.

English Literature can be a very difficult subject to grasp, especially for the Indian students, and more so for students from vernacular background. But our professors in the department ensured that we got over the cultural barrier with ease and acclimatized us to the nuances of the English language. This helped us in understanding and enjoying literary geniuses which were prescribed for our syllabus. Chaucerian English became familiar, Shakespearean vocabulary accessible, Metaphysicals much loved for their brilliant metaphors, the dilemma of the modern poets lamentable. Thus, navigating through the labyrinth of postcolonial theory and the regular waves of feminism became less overwhelming. Thanks to them "Deconstruction" did indeed begin with the simplest metaphor of the building blocks. Complex ideas and problematic themes made more sense to us and thanks to the efforts of each and every wonderful professors who so seamlessly bridged the gap between the intimidating jargons and their overtly practical application. All my professors took care to help us go through the texts, guided us well and sometimes kindly translated texts for us, so that we could understand them. They were all approachable, patient and understanding. They nurtured our interests and steered it in the right directions. We were exposed to a lot of critical thinking and debates. The

seminars and talks that were regularly conducted helped boost our confidence and encouraged us to speak our minds and opinions, even though they would often be very naïve and lack complete research.

But that was not all. The Department taught us values that one may cherish through life. It was not about the academics alone. Teachers were our guides and mentors. They often times would generously guide us through the predicament of not the academic world alone, but the woes of personal life as well. Whether it would be a debate of the correct choice of profession and a career that most suited our personality or guidance into more intimate personal relationship (that is common among young students), our professors were always ready to help us and ensured our well-being.

But my relationship with Ravenshaw doesn't alone end with me being a student of this University. I was overwhelmed when I got an opportunity to join the institute as a guest lecturer. Even though my tenure was short, I am thankful for this brief yet the most enriching experience of my professional career. Though I joined the Department as a teacher, I knew that I was here to learn from her again. And indeed, as a faculty I learned more than I ever had as a student. The values of punctuality, honesty, diligence, humility and professionalism that I learned during this phase are going to stay with me for the rest of my life. She taught me to be patient and understanding of students while also being extremely kind and helpful to them. After this brief sojourn as a Guest Lecturer in Ravenshaw, I relocated myself to Bengaluru, where I joined Mount Carmel College in the post of Asst. Professor of English and I owe this to my preliminary years in Ravenshaw's English Department. My years in Ravenshaw, both as a student and teacher, is the source of my confidence and my indomitable efforts in making a difference (however small) in the life of my students here in M. C. C., Bangalore. This Centenary Celebration is not only a joyous occasion for us but a reminder of the great legacy that each one of us must carry forward. And we must strive to uphold the great tradition and work towards achieving greater heights. Thus, I take this opportunity to thank Ravenshaw's English Department from the bottom of my heart and hope I can be of service to her again in the future.

[Aditi Chatterjee is currently working as the Assistant Professor at Mount Carmel College Autonomous. She is renowned for research on V. S. Naipaul's non-fiction, post-colonial and diaspora studies, ecofeminism and zoocriticism.]



Smiling at Autumn

Dr. Binayak Prasad Pradhan
M.A.: 2007-09 , Ph.D.: 2012-20

As I gorge upon the vacant page to write something for the Souvenir of the P.G. Department of English, Ravenshaw University, I experience something like recovering from amnesia, yet suffering from déjà vu. As waves of memories ripple past, I am able to catch a handful of them from the pool that had teethed in me and always continue to pull its deep and prompt impact on my academic, professional as well as personal life.

Once, while the sky was opening to pour outside and inside the class, I was surprisingly asked by Prof. Amulya Kishore Purohit to define Romanticism. I remember to have filled in the whole class with the definition given by Walter Pater. Even today, when I teach Romanticism to my students, I delightfully look outside to sense that day's strongest sign of inspiration – was it Purohit Sir or the weather?Another adventure of learning was Prof. Kamala Prasad Mahapatra's class on *Hamlet* - his instinctive fashion of using synonyms (brave, bold, sagacious, audacious) - which had left overwhelming impression on me and I, at present, even fancy to be a logophile / philologos / lexicomane / verbomaniac. If Steele and Addison modestly claimed to have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries to tea tables at coffee houses, along that line I would proudly acknowledge Prof. Suman Mahapatra, Prof. Chinmoy Jena and Prof. Nandita Mahapatra to have brought the world of fictions, events, characters from annotated text books to real life in the classroom. What it was like sitting through Prof. Tapan Kanti Pattnaik's classes, his lectures on *The Wasteland* by Eliot - prophetic, apocalyptic and mostly redemptive. If Huckfinn's adventures remained unchallenged in literature over times, then my permanent joy or pride was to follow our HOD to Alfa sessions, which was ambitiously our own version of literary Bloomsbury elite group. I still remember vividly the detailed discussion of Plato's *Republic* by Mr. Devdas Chhotray, the then Vice Chancellor and a renowned poet of Odisha. Of all the times, the music jamming and chorus practice have reserved the happiest part of my Ravenshaw days during which I could comprehend Elizabeth Bishop's *I'm In Need of Music* in a much better way.

After years, in my journey of acquiring Doctoral degree, the same Department of English, Ravenshaw University, with its enormous support and guidance, played the role of Dickensian benefactor. I always hold my Supervisor, Prof. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty in high esteem for his strict adherence to Gandhian philosophy which greatly moulded me as a human being and academician. However, after the completion of my Ph.D., I felt a profound sense of abandonment assuming that my ties or formal association with Ravenshaw would be snapped entirely. But, being a student of literature, mentored by such great minds of the Department of English, Ravenshaw University, I still look happily at the autumn field. I still feel like turning the clock back and reliving those days at the cost of everything I have at my disposal. My Department has a definite magnetism that pulls me towards it time and again. All those memories have been indelibly imprinted in my mind and will be a part of my existence till I breathe my last.

[Dr. Binayak Prasad Pradhan is currently working as a Lecturer in English at Governmant Science College, Ayeba, Kendrapara. Apart from English Literature, Dr. Pradhan pursues literary criticism, cultural studies, history and music with equal interest. He has published a good number of research papers in both national and international journals.]

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Ravenshaw University and the Department of English

Mr. Ganesh Mishra
M.A.: 2010-12

When I was a high school student in Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj, I often heard the name of Ravenshaw College from my teachers and other elderly people. They told that only talented and fortunate students get the opportunity to study in this prestigious institution as it is one of the oldest and reputed institutions of Odisha and India. I never thought to study in Ravenshaw during my high school days, but when I took English Honours during my graduation, I was inspired by my two teachers, Prof. R. S. Tiwary and Prof. Aswini Kumar Sahoo, as both were from the Department of English of Ravenshaw College. They always said that the Department of English is the best and prestigious department. From that day I wished to study in Ravenshaw which became a University in 2006.

I was not a very talented student, but I must say I was lucky to get admitted for the Post-Graduate course in Ravenshaw University in 2010. By the mercy of God, I also got a seat in New P.G. Hostel which helped me reside inside the campus. I got immense pleasure and enough time to know this sacred institution and its heart, the English Department, which was set up in 1922. Many great and famous students and teachers had brought a new Renaissance to the sky of Odisha. When I went to do my first class in my Department, I was quite nervous as I was from Mayurbhanj and nobody was known to me in Cuttack. I was only alone to study at Ravenshaw from my college and from my native place, Rairangpur. But gradually I got some very good friends like Shiba, Ranjan, Priya, Sradhanjali, Lucky, Sona, Niranjan, Meera, Subhashree, Ritika and many others. They always supported me to adjust with the new environment. Apart from this I got a new type of inspiration and pleasure when I came across the teachers like Prof. Dipti Ranjan Pattnaik who happened to be our Head of the Department, Prof. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, Prof. Rajani Kanta Naik, Prof. Subhra Prakash Das popularly known as Bikash Sir, Prof. SusmitaPani, Prof. Sumitra Mishra, Prof. Madhusmita Pati, Prof. Khagendra Sethy and Prof. SambitPanigrahi.

All the above-mentioned teachers were amazing and students-friendly who always loved the students and helped them to build their careers.

We had successfully organized International Seminars on Children's Literature and National Translation Workshop which are memorable moments of my life. I can never forget the teaching of Mrutyunjaya Sir, how he narrates poetry in his unique style. I still remember how he was teaching *The Waste Land*; we felt as if we were watching a live telecast. The teaching of Rajani Sir on Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron and Coleridge was heart-touching. Both use very simple words and phrases to make the students understand the subject.

The leadership ability and organising quality of Dipti Sir inspired me to become a leader and organiser. I was surprised to see his public, political and administrative connections in the State and outside the State. I cannot forget the love, affection and advice received from Bikash Sir, Khagendra Sir and Sambit Sir. They also always inspired us and treated us like their sons and younger brothers. Picnic, welcome and farewell ceremony and study tours were not possible without the direct involvement of evergreen Bikash Sir, we call him Amitabh Bachhan Sir. We learnt to wear helmet and its importance from Sambit Sir, because he always used to come to campus wearing helmet, even though at that time police was not strict on wearing helmet.

I could not know how the golden period of two years passed in Ravenshaw in the family of the English Department. I cannot forget the personality of respected Mrtyunujaya Mohanty Sir, he never entertains illegal activities, always fights for justice, never shows arrogance being a Senior University Reader, always guides the students to become good human beings, listens patiently to the complaints of students as he was in charge of our New P.G. Hostel as Superintendent. The mother-like figures of Susmita Madam, Madhusmita Madam and Urmee Madam never allowed us to miss our mothers and homes. They always talked to us softly, never used any rough words. Sometimes I and my friends have hurt them by making a show of our leadership amongst the students. I repent for this and beg pardon. Really my English Department is a royal department for everything. Many socially recognised personalities like Hon'ble MP Cuttack, Shri BhatruhariMahatab; former Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Shri Dipak Mishra; former Income Tax Commissioner, Shri Pradosh Chandra Mohanty are the products of our department. I am proud of my department because so many great poets, actors, writers, administrators, politicians, judges, businessmen, teachers and social workers who have a special place in Odisha, outside Odisha and also in international stage belong to this department.

I want to say and write many things about my department and teachers but cannot get words to describe the beautiful moments of every day, every class, every occasion of long two years.

I must say that this department has taught me to become a good human being to help the needy, to do something good for the society.

I am trying my best to follow the footprints of my respected teachers. Lastly, I would say that the Department of English of Ravenshaw University is a Paradise for me; we shall never allow this Paradise to lose.

[Mr. Ganesh Mishra is an academician who is currently working as a Senior Faculty at Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences(KISS), Bhubaneswar.]

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Oh, dear Ravenshaw!

Ms. Shruti Mohanty
B.A.: 2009-12, M.A.: 2012-14, Ph.D.: 2015-continuing

Oh, dear Ravenshaw !

You are part of me, the journey of my life will never be complete without you being part of it. Ravenshaw, the Red Bricks building is witness to geographical, cultural, scenario of Odisha's history since time immemorial. The very building is an important part of freedom struggle, which has given freedom fighters, lawyers contributed in its own way in nation's growth. The very word Ravenshaw symbolizes a heritage of culture, tradition, values of Odisha. Everyone who has walked through the lanes, knows what place you have carved in their heart. An empire, a recluse, for a student who is aware of Ravenshaw's history which stands tall since 1868, an epitome of knowledge which has produced 5 Governors and 9 Chief Ministers. As said, "Anybody who is somebody in Odisha is a Ravenshawvian."

I entered as a Bachelor of Arts student getting an admission in the Department of English, in this beautiful world of Ravenshaw, become a Ravenshawvian. I was nervous, anxious as it was for the first time I was entering into college, and that too Ravenshaw. My family members very happy and proud that I am going to be the part their prestigious alma mater. On the first day of admission, my father accompanied me, asking where is the English Department? We walked through the Arts block witnessing huge building, lawns and prestigious 'Kanika Library' (One of the best libraries in Odisha). I saw many students sitting in the lawn, I gripped my father's hand tightly trying to figure out how will I survive alone, as this was for the first time, I was leaving my family, my home behind, but I never knew this would become my second home. The moment, I entered the Department, my eyes were full of tears as my father dropped me in the class. So many faces – some nervous, some happy but everyone were full of life. We became friends, the tension, anxiety ebbed away and atmosphere became light. When we entered Ravenshaw, it had just become a Ravenshaw University (2006) from Ravenshaw College. So, the process of becoming a University was not complete.

We had our first class where we were introduced to our lovely teachers. I remember the first class was taken by Dr. Rabi Mishra Sir. Sir who in the very first class told us that as a student of English, we should understand the relevance of this subject, future of the subject. He recommended us books that were important for a student of English to be thorough about. Like: *History of English Literature* by Ifor

Evans, Edward Albert, *Background of English Literature* by B. Prasad, and *Rhetoric and Prosody* by M.Chakraborti. He told as an English student you have to be careful about your vocabulary as well as grammar. We became nervous as we would have to shoulder certain responsibilities.

But in the very next class came Dr.Sumitra Mishra. She was very sweet to us. She taught us History of English Literature. We became relaxed as we made friends, Poonam, Ipsita, Swasti, Shikha, Priyadarshini, Smruti, Gaurav, Monica, Micky, Beena, Supriya, Rama, Mahendra, Prerna, Sonu. I am sorry, I am not able to write everyone's name. We all girl students got one hostel, and one of the best hostels with best staff who made our journey more comfortable.

Then came Dr. Nandita Mohapatra, we were all mesmerized by her. Her teaching style, her ease, made us enjoy her class. She taught us Victorian poetries. Mr. Rajnikanta Nayak who taught us Romantic poetry. He was very effable and friendly with students so it become easier for us to adjust in the Department.

Then came Dinesh Pattanayak Sir, who taught us *The Eve of St. Agnes*, he explained us each and every line of the poetry, making us understand a poetry is not in lines but also emotions, feeling which is to be discovered in its secondary and tertiary level. He taught us that the most important thing in life is to live your life with principles, morality and discipline. He has always guided us to move forward in life with confidence.

Then after a year came Dr. Mrutyunjaya Mohanty, Dr. Subhra Prakash Das, Dr. Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik, Dr. Sushmita Pani, Dr. Basant Kumar Triparty, Dr. Madhusmita Pati, Dr. Khagendra Sethi, Dr. SambitPanigrahi, Dr. Urmishree Bedamatta, Mrs. Madhumita Das, Dr. Aditi Madam, Dr. Bismita Pradhan, Dr. Krishnaprada Dash.

When Mrutyunjaya Sir used to teach us, we all used to wait for his class because it was informative, interesting. Sir used to teach us T. S. Eliot and others and the way he knows nobody knows it. When Sir taught us *The Wasteland*, he started with poems from Chaucer's times to Eliot's and he recited each poetry line by line without seeing the book. We all used to wonder how he could remember so many lines. He always used to come to class in time. I have learned the importance of punctuality from him. When Subhra Prakash Sir, taught us Drama and Indian Aesthetics, the way we he used enact the play and read the lines it became interesting. The way he taught drama nobody can do that. Madhusmita Madam taught us feminism, a subject which I am really fond of. She sketched before us aspects of feminism and its importance in shaping the place of women in literature. Sushmita Madam taught us Alexander Pope's poetry and used to gives us every detailed description about the words, author and his times so that we became clear about it. Dipti Sir taught us essays which he used to compare and contrast with daily life example so that we can understand it. Basant Sir used to teach us modern poetry, and the way he explained we do not even again to understand it.

Khagendra Sir taught us Thomas Hardy's novels. He used to dictate us secondary sources so that we can be clear about the author and its times. He used to be very calm, composed and used to say that along with knowledge you should have humility. Sambit Sir taught us Indian poetry. He used to explain us each line patiently by answering each and everyone's queries. He never raised his voice but tell us very calmly to be quiet in class. Urmishree Madam taught us the importance and role in shaping the History of English. Madhumita Madam, used to teach us The Importance of Being Earnest, she used to be very sweet, and enact the important lines for us so that we can understand the play properly. Bismita Madam and Aditi Madam taught us for a short period of time, but it helped us in our studies.

I think I was lucky to meet Krishna Madam. She helped us in our seminar paper and always taught to experiment with some new topics so that we can expand our horizon of knowledge. She used to guide and explain us in each and every step. She used to smile and explain our every doubt.

So many things I can write about our teachers have contributed in shaping, building our future. I am always thankful to them. I feel proud to be a part of this prestigious hall, its an asset for me. I have got so much from this place that my life will be incomplete without it.

Then with passage of time, Ravenshaw became a part of my identity. It has seen me grown up as a naïve student who entered the university in 2009 and now a Ph.D. Scholar in the Department of English knowing her responsibilities as a Ravenshawvian. A part of me will always long for Ravenshaw as it is my second home, which I entered as a girl and will be leaving with thousand memories which I will cherish forever. I always be grateful to my alma mater for teaching me so many things', contributing in making me self-made person. As a host elite, I grew up in an atmosphere which taught us to be sharing, caring, adjusting, accommodating to all kinds of situations, events, places, peoples. We became aware of so many cultures, peoples and had learned to respect everyone's point of view. We all know hostel life is of great fun, I am lucky to stay in Parija, as well Kathajodi Hostel, where I have made friends for lifetime, who have played a great role in shaping my life.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ravenshaw, a name that arose various emotion in my heart awe, respect, love and tint of pain. My heart swells with pride whenever I meet a Ravenshawvian, as I am a proud Ravenshawvian.

Thank You, Ravenshaw!

[Ms. Shruti Mohanty is working as a Lecturer in English at Kujang College. She is continuing Ph.D. in the Department of English, Ravenshaw University and her area of research is American Non-fiction.]

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From a Mud Cabin to the Red Building

Mr. Sukumar Mohanty
B.A.: 2011-14, M.A.: 2014-16

I know that to talk about my personal life story here is totally unnecessary. But to understand the importance of this red building to me and to my life, one has to have a little patience. Nobody, even my parents and I do not know about my actual date of birth yet. Yes, it is a fact that I was born on someday when poverty was punching hard to my parents, with worn out polythene roof on the head. My father was not happy and ready (my mother says) to add the third entry to his burden book. I do not know who named Sukumar (which means 'good son') to this unwanted child. My school records say I was a bright student, always reserving the first position in the class. Most of the time I was remaining absent from the class as my father was against my studies so that I could help him in the farm, which was for us like the tonic to the patient. Many times I had collected my school bag from the pond very near my home. During my matriculation I was given special attention by my teachers, but I simply disappointed them, though I still managed to score good marks.

In the long vacation I started giving tuition (to high school students) and for the first time I tasted the fruit of being a teacher. I was getting more than what I could expect, and I couldn't think beyond that. I was very much enjoying it. I enrolled myself in the +2 classes in a college which is more than 15 kms away from my home, which I could manage with my bicycle. Even if I loved Science, and all told me to take that, I chose Arts stream, because of my financial disability, so that I could earn and learn. In that two year course, in the first year, I was rarely going to college but was busy in giving tuitions. Six months before the final second year exam, I stopped giving tuition and with a thin wallet filled with tuition fees, I left my home to stay in a private mess near my college. And six months I forgot all the ways except the way to my college and book stores. I forgot all except my books, copies, and pens. All I was doing was in silence. I knew nobody and nobody knew me.

It was 30 June 2011, time around 11 to 11:30 am, when I got a phone call and it was from the Principal of my college, "Are you Sukumar Mohanty?" I replied, "Yes Sir." Then he declared in a cheerful voice, "I am your Principal. You are in the list of all Odisha toppers, you are the first student to do so since the establishment of our college,

we are so proud of you." I did not know what and how I responded to him because I had never thought of that even in the wildest of my imagination.

Many media personnel (both from print and electronic) came, asked me many questions in many ways with many arrangements. I put on a white shirt, still in half pants. In half confidence, and in half English I answered what I would do next... "RAVENSHAW", "ENGLISH". Then they captured photos, me with my family members, the half broken old house and with the half built new Government sponsored house. In the evening my villagers said they saw me on Television; the next day I found my photo with other toppers in the newspaper. Yes, I was happy.

I had never visited Cuttack. Ravenshaw, though I had heard many times rhetorically from my school teachers (study in the red building, and be like Madhu Babu). It was totally an unknown island for me like Prospero, but me without having the magical power to get control over the place and the situation. With one of my relatives I reached the gate of the red building. A security guard showed us the way to the Commerce Block. I was having a very strong gaze at every sign board, the age-old building, its colour, long pillars, construction design, the road, everything that came on my way. We waited for my call and got that very early, as my university admission rank was 11. In the final moment, I do not know what came over me, I enrolled myself in Economics to which I changed within a month to English and got the last class Roll No: UG11-EN-067.

My first class, I went with my friend. We went to the first floor and there I saw the glorious DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY, ESTD: 1922. In the classroom we chose the last seat at the corner. Very large room, big windows, boys and girls sitting near each other without shyness, talking in mixed Odia, Hindi and English in their urban elite tone. I felt like Prufrock, shy and awkward towards women. For the first time I listened English in the class for long 45 minutes. I thought as if I was in England. Being a State Board Odia medium student, it was very difficult for me to understand more than 20 percent of the lectures. For more than six months, I felt myself like a small fish of tiny fresh water pond who was not fit for this big brackish bay. I did not know what to read, how to read and score marks. But one class I was enjoying very much was that of Mrutyunjaya Sir. The most difficult paper for me was the Social History of England. In that year our university changed exam pattern for mid-semester and introduced term-paper writing 15 marks and for attendance 5 marks. For that reason I was never missing any class. My first semester result was very very disappointing. I

scored less than 45 percent. My tormented, troubled mind could not focus on the books; I only stared at the bed, the white painted ceiling of my hostel room and the slowly moving noisy fan. Many sleepless nights passed, thinking about the topper seal stumped on me. And College Square Sai Baba Temple became a frequent place of visit in the evening for my hungry and helpless mind and also for the tasty free meal.

During my first visit to home from Ravenshaw, people of my village were very excited about me, but I was not. Every one greeted me cordially and asked me about the red building which appeared to me as a dreadful dungeon. Everything I replied was fake or false. I knew I was not making them fool but myself. Their expectations put a big rock on my heavy head.

Time passed on and so also my worries. This little fish was learning how to live in a big bay. I formatted my mind and deleted all the bugs, my pride as a topper, my past percentage, and all that which were eating me. I began to feel light like a small boat. I moved with the flow of the easy wind – left-right, backward-forward, everywhere. I learnt to dance with the tune of the world, instead of my own. I felt easy, and that changed my life.

Eventually I started sitting at the front row and dared to stand up and ask questions to the teachers. I fell in love with the English Language, and I was all the time a lover of English Literature and the two merged and turned into a lifelong love, my dear English Literature. My confidence stepped up, and with that my fear about future vanished like the erosion of darkness at dawn with the rise of the sun. I still remember the UG final year seminar presentation, Mr. Kurtz, Africa, ivory, maps, charts, and in the end the flood of loud claps. The final results of UG came out and I found my roll number in first division with distinction section.

I fell in love with this red building – the hostel, the road, the friends, the freedom, the late-night roaming and the tea at the railway station. I had understood that here one can make oneself or can destroy. I could not think about my P.G. beyond Ravenshaw. And those two years were the most wonderful time of my life. I got new friends and that also included girls. For the first time in my life, I could talk to girls with confidence. Eating sprouts and cakes from Bopa uncle in-front of PLT and CLT and also at lawn became a daily routine for us after class. Yes, I was enjoying the classes. Asking question to clear my doubts became an easy task. I still remember the lectures on *The Waste Land* by Mrutyunjaya Sir – the mountain-like big subject and complex 434 line poem became easy and soft like cheese. The explanations of Latin phrases, the Sanskrit words

and slokas, the allusions, the elucidation, the views of different critics and sometimes his sudden and unexpected short and sweet Odia clarifications are still vibrating in my heart and mind. Another interesting topic for me was "Rasa Theory". I had helped to clear the doubts of many of my classmates, and in joke, sometimes they were calling me "Rasika Master".

I still remember, in September 2015, a news spread out among our friends that our favourite Mrutyunjaya Sir was retiring that month. I was unable to believe that, because it was the final year of our P.G.. One day, when he was leaving the classroom I asked Sir about that news. He just simply smiled and said, "Yes, but do not worry, I will still visit regularly." I could say nothing, and Sir went with the same touching smile. Then after a few days I saw the notice on 28.09.2015 for his Farewell. I requested Sir for a photo and I clicked. In the evening I bought a good drawing sheet (I used to use A4 paper) and started making a pencil sketch of him. While I was doing the sketch, the catching smile of Sir was flashing in my mind, but I did not find the same smile in the photo that I had clicked. After completion of the sketch on the basis of the photo I tried to add the same smile that was flashing in my mind. I tried many times, but failed. Next day when I was in his class, as always in the front row. I only marked his smile, the movement of his lips, cheek and eyes. In the late night when there were less disturbances in the hostel I tried again, and I was successful. A smile came to me too, I do not know why, perhaps for the unknown and unseen bond. Next day when I reached the department, I came to know that the Farewell Ceremony for Sir would take place that day. I did not attend the classes and returned to the hostel room and took the sketch to bind it in a frame. The meeting started; I enrolled my name for a short speech. My name was called and I went to the podium with the sketch covered with newspaper. I remember, I became very emotional, words were not coming to me, and with a short speech at end I said, "Sir, I was a clay. You have made me a beautiful idol. I have nothing, I cannot give you anything, but this tiny gift is from my hand and my heart." After that I unfolded the portrait and showed it to all. The room was full of loud claps, and I handed over the portrait to Sir. All the teachers were very much impressed, they were looking at the portrait and were looking at me with heart-winning smile. That was the best day, that was the worst day of my life.

Then our own farewell day came. It was so amazing. Our juniors had organised it so beautifully. The decoration, the lights, the sounds and the dance, made our day. In the end, we left the department. I still remember my farewell speech where I had said, "In my exit, is the seed of my entry. I happily accept it as the farewell of a student, as

my wish is to be welcomed as a teacher." Our P.G. final exam result came out and with that we got to know that we had to leave this place. I was still staying in hostel and one day a thought came to my mind, "what to do?", "where to go?" Suddenly a piece of big cloud covered my life. I was thinking of myself as a fish out of water. Then one day I was reading the newspaper in the hostel reading room while I came across the job vacancy advertisement of various private institutions. After one of the interviews when I was offered the Joining Letter, my joy knew no bounds. I came back to the hostel and felt relaxed. I thought about the maker of this prestigious age-old institution. I simply smiled and thanked.

Today I am well established, working as a Government Assistant Professor, earning well, have a beautiful family, a beautiful wife, a big house, a decent car. But I am always grateful to this red building which has made me. I am very grateful to all my teachers, who, being the guardians, have consoled me, and showed me the right path to my success, my life. I still remember the past days, the struggle, the ancient broken Scooty, the hostel food, the English department, the classes, the question, the answer, the picnic, the friends, the gossip *(Khati)*, the annual functions, the welcome, the farewell, the speeches, the sound, the dance, the election, the selection, the late-night chicken cooking, roaming and singing song, all are still as fresh as the new grown leaves in the Spring. I feel fortunate to be a product of this century-old man-making industry, the Department of English of this red building. Proud to be a Ravenshawvian, proud to be a student of the English Department.

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Erinnerungen: Memories at My Hogwarts

Mr. Sakti Sekhar Dash

B.A.: 2012-14, M.A.: 2015-17, Ph.D.: 2019-continuning

After a not-so satisfactory result in 12th, I took a tough call. I decided to switch from science stream to Arts. Courses in engineering and medical sciences were in vogue and when I made the call, I knew what I would be going through. But I had to play to my strengths, and I opted for the Bachelor of Arts in English. It was an unforgettable day when I was allotted the Roll No. 14 DEN 045. I became a part of a family- The Department of English, Ravenshaw University. Little did I know the journey that started in 2014 would alter my life and career forever.

I was little more than a young fellow unsure of himself, but I found my true calling in language and literature. I learnt to give in to the flights of fancies and imagination. Perusing through Eliot, Milton, Wordsworth, and Yeats, I tried my hand at poetry. The first few attempts were amateurish, but I connected with my creative spirit. The Department's atmosphere proved most conducive for the creative growth; the Department has always backed the budding poets and writers. And largely due to this encouragement, the amateurish verses blossomed into poems of substance. Never for a moment did I feel out of place. There was a quaint old charm in the department I immediately fell for; the old texts, history, the myriad anecdotes just kept on fuelling my passion for English language and literature.

Among the countless memories I have created with the Department, the one that stands out is the Farewell of 2017. For a moment I wondered, "Is it going to be over"? I couldn't bring myself to believe that the journey of 3 years was at an end. It was my Hogwarts, and I couldn't stay away for long. I cleared the Bachelor of Arts with Distinction and First Class. But I had set my sights on going for the Master's Degree. 14 DEN 045 became 17 MEN 001. I was back at my Hogwarts. In December, 2018 I cleared U.G.C. N.E.T. I certainly owe a large chunk of the success to the Department. For a student who was unsure of his career when he switched streams after 12th, the goal was pretty much clear due to the department and its faculties' unwavering support and encouragement.

In the final year of my Master's Degree, I went for a picnic. For an introverted guy, it was a memorable experience. However, I missed most of my classes during the final semester owing to ill health. I recovered in time for my examinations and managed to secure a first class. I was no longer the confused individual; I had a clear sight of the path I had chosen to follow. And 17 MEN 001 became 19 PH-EN 001. I entered the world of research. From juggling with facts, I forayed into the domain of critical thinking, analyzing literary texts and theories, discussing new areas of research, and publishing essays.

The Department has shaped my career, backing me during the toughest times. The memories are innumerable, and I will fondly cherish those. The journey at my Hogwarts may be coming to a close, but the memories will remain and I will always be a proud family member of the Department of English, Ravenshaw University.

[Sakti Sekhar Dash is a Fellow of Social Science Research Council, Open Association of Research Society, USA. Currently, he is engaged as a Senior Researcher in the Department of English, Ravenshaw University. With a profound interest in literature, history, and culture, he has extensively studied the myths, legends, and folklore of ancient Greece, Egypt, Rome, and India. As a researcher he loves to revisit and re-examine ancient texts from multiple perspectives.]



A Home and The Season 1 of A Coming-of-Age Series

Ms. Stutee Mishra
B.A.: 2017-20, M.A: 2020-22

The whole life is a series of 'Coming of Age' movies fit together. Or well let's call it a really long running Netflix series. Just that in real life, we do not have background music or a happy ending that marks the end of the movie. Rather we have those small moments where we sleep peacefully after making peace with one phase of our life and all the lessons and the harsh circumstances. Only to wake up the next morning, realising that there is a new challenge on the horizon. And that's how it goes on till we grow old. Well, I am not sure what emotions one exactly goes through when you are in the evening (writers have often referred to old age as evening) of your life. But as of now, I guess I am in the noon stage of my life. Which everyone around me calls, 'the peak' time of your life. This is when we make our careers, figure out what we want to be in this world. And obviously finding out the venture from where we fill our pockets with money. Not to forget, that we start 'Adulting' and experience the harsher aspects of this world.

If by assigning time to the phases of life, I would say, that I am currently in the noon of my life, then my life in Ravenshaw would be the late morning. I entered Ravenshaw when I was 16. Even though, that was the junior college and I entered university when I was 18. But all in all, I have spent 5 years in Ravenshaw and I guess I can safely say, that was the season 1 of my coming-of-age series. While I entered junior college as a 16-year-old kid full of rage, confidence, excitement and immaturity, I left the University, with confidence and excitement and the rage too but of course in a controlled manner. But when we talk of maturity, that is something I think is kind of an ever-growing process. Maybe when we grow really old, we reach a stage where we can call ourselves fully mature. But till then, I think every new place we go to, we learn and grow. Sometimes in a cool manner while sometimes in harsh ways.

My 5 years here were no less than an adventure in itself full of twists and turns and an abundance of lessons. But in all of this, the biggest highlight would be the friends I made in this place. And that, how I started from hating Ravenshaw to absolutely

loving it and realising that Ravenshaw is my home. Home is where your heart lies and I can now say for sure that a huge part of my heart lies in Ravenshaw.

I have been alone here, been surrounded by people, made a fool of myself, earned appreciation, lost out on some dreams, fulfilled some, lost friends, gained many more and at last, would repeat it again, hated this place and finally loved it with all of my heart. I have seen many seasons change in this place. I have experienced dark cold winters, soothing spring, fun summers and gloomy rainy days. But I have also experienced warmth in the cold winters, scorching heat in summers, fun in the rain and sometimes pain in soothing spring. Today when I am at another University for my masters, and the lessons have doubled and so has the struggles, my heart yearns for my home. But it's a yearning that cannot be satisfied. What do you call a home that you cannot go back to? A home. Nothing else. That's it. And you have to leave places to grow, to move on to next phases of your life. I cannot go back to Ravenshaw. All I have with me are the beautiful moments that I hold close to my heart and really amazing stories to tell my future kids. The late morning has turned into noon and slowly it will move to afternoon, evening and night. But I know for sure, in all of my time in this clock of life, which is the place that I will hold on to tightly in my heart.

When I got the mail to write a piece for the souvenir for the centenary celebration, I was confused as to what to write. There is so much to say that it would not be possible to put it all into one piece and so I sat down and finally after much thinking, penned down these few lines from my heart. Would conclude this piece, by stressing more on the 'home' aspect. Ravenshaw is the home where you have grown up and where your parents live and where your comfort lies. And the University where I study in currently and the places I will go to in future, will be places you move in to when you move out of your house to work. All of them can be called homes. But I guess we all know, which one of them is the place we get the warmth and the comfort from. And while Ravenshaw is the old home, the Department of English, would be your old room which has the bed with the sheets which gives you the peace and the happiness, no place has ever been able to.

[Ms. Stutee Mishra is an ardent reader and passionate about Literature, she aims to go for higher education in the field of research in the subject.]

☐

The Bewitching Red Empire

Ms. Bidisha Mohanty
B.A.: 2017-20, M.A: 2020-22

I will start by being honest, I was not the happiest while getting into Ravenshaw University. With having other prospects in mind for myself but not getting to do that, I entered Ravenshaw as a total grumpy being. But now, three years later, I can say without any hesitation that I do not regret it a single bit. From not being fond of that place, to writing romantic lines for that 'Red Empire', I did it all. I feel the humongous empire has the power of a sorceress or else how and why would I experience such conflicting emotions for a place!

Soon Ravenshaw became pretty likeable, and that third floor of commerce block became home. But what I still disliked was the long walk from my hostel to the department. For the love of my legs! By the way, if you are still wondering, I was the student of the most sophisticated department of the university, emm, English department I mean. For reasons still unknown to me, our department was addressed as that by everyone. Maybe it was because we could speak English quite rapidly and others assumed whatever we said was correct? (C'mon, we all know that sometimes we ourselves didn't understand what was said). Whatever maybe the reason, I am sure we all enjoyed the expression of others every time we said, "I am from English Department". But, I feel, what added to the sophistication is the aura of our faculties which was unmissable to be precise.

Three years and more than three thousand memories that I carried back home, and I can proudly say I cherish them all. Be it hosting every function in the department or even my farewell speech, every event had a charm of its own. It is not only these memories, but also the people that I met there who are going to stay with me till the end of the world. Ravenshaw gifted me with the right set of friends, faculties, and of course, memories. I mean the very fact of me not being happy in the beginning to bawling my eyes out on the day of my farewell, says it all. To the ones in the department now and who will join in the near future, I have nothing to advice. Because every individual finds a story of themselves that they get weaved into in the university. Just wait for your story to find you. And for the department, I pray that it lives and passes on the legacy of the "most sophisticated department", so that I can keep bragging about the same in every journal hereafter.

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A Divine Presence in an Ancient Place!

Mr. Subhransu Dash
B.A.: 2021 - continuing

I still remember the first day when I officially stepped into the Department of English of Ravenshaw University. Previously, I had been to Ravenshaw University for various competitions and tournaments. The feeling of coming to the campus as a visitor and as a student is completely different from each other.

To be honest, I was interested to pursue my under graduation outside Odisha. Due to Covid and other reasons, I did not go outside. Undoubtedly, I made it a point that if I stay here, I will study in Ravenshaw. Being an ardent lover of literature, I enrolled myself into the English Department.

I would also like to describe my lengthy admission process. Because of not securing above 90% in my 12th board examinations, I did not qualify in the first round of admissions. The competition for getting one single seat in the English Department of this university was so tough that I did not qualify in the second admission process too. It was a lesson worth learning. Never had I ever faced so much embarrassment in my entire life. Ravenshaw taught me the real race of life. If you do not work hard for that one single seat, that will not be yours EVER. Eventually, after being restless and anxious for two weeks, I got my admission in the honours changing process which happens at the last. So technically, according to societal norms, I am a donkey because mine is the last roll number. Nevertheless, I was too happy to get a chance of studying here.

Within the last six months of studying over here, I have learnt a lot of things and I am learning many things every day. Starting from the seniors' interaction to the freshers and literary events and of course, the semester examinations, everything was new for us. Our batch was is literally bored after staying two long years at home and spending their high school online. Offline classes are so much fun and interactive as compared to online classes.

Whenever I get time, I make it a point to judiciously spend it either in Kanika Library or go to the lawn and write a poem. It was as if the department and the university

welcomed us with her open arms after staying closed for two years. We made new friends, learnt many life lessons, participated in various competitions, represented the department in literary and sports field and many more. Extracurricular activities have always been a part of the English Department and our students have always made it a point to stay on top, no matter what circumstances may come ahead.

The department's glorious history was quite remarkably seen after stepping into it. It was as if the legacy passes on from generations to generations. The cherry on the top factor were the professors who never made us feel alone. Starting from Khagendra Sir, Sambit Sir, Gurudev Sir, Dipti Sir, UrmiMa'am, to Monalisa Ma'am, Soumya Sir, Anurag Sir and Chandan Sir - all of them are very sincere when it comes to any work of the department. Starting from taking constant classes to making the class student friendly: we all made an inseparable bond with all of them.

Although being a student of the first year, I should not speak much as I think I have very less idea about the department, but, whatever I have felt, that's very divine. Being a student of the English Department Ravenshaw University has many benefits too. I proudly announce this fact in front of my friends who are outside Odisha and they get envious by seeing our honourable list of alumni.

Whenever I feel low, I constantly gaze at the corridor. I am reminded that this is the same corridor, the same classroom, the same tables and chairs which have produced some of the greatest pioneers of literature in our nation and even internationally. I am reminded of the rich cultural heritage that our English Department has.

Hence, being a student who will be keenly witnessing the CENTENARY celebrations of this department, I feel I am lucky enough to be here as a part of this great imperial family. I am equally excited and looking forward to witness the upcoming years of my graduation and to the moments which I will cherish forever in life.

With love from the last roll number 21DEN082.

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Pages from the Last Century

My Reminiscences

Gopinath Mohanty

(Sri Gopinath Mohanty, studied English Literature in the Ravenshaw College, He made his distinctive mark as an able officer in the Orissa Administrative Despite his manifold engagements he has contributed substantially to the enrichment of modern Odia fiction. He is also a prolific writer of short stories. His monumental works include Paraja, AmrutarSantan, LayaBilaya and Mati Matala. He has been awarded the Bharatiya Jnana Pitha Award in 1974. Sri Mohanty has also obtained the Central Sahitya Academy award for his novel Amrutar Santan. He has a single-minded devotion to his art.)

Yes, I am a student of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. If my memory does not fail me, I am probably the first Secretary of the English Association of the Ravenshaw College and a very interesting college career I started by being a student of science with pure science as my subjects consisting of Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Botany. After 1. Sc. I changed over to pure Arts, to B.A. with Economics & Sanskrit as my subjects and with English Hons. Then in M.A. my subject was English Language and Literature. My grounding in science did me good. It undoubtedly gave me an analytical approach which every writer needs. My change to pure Arts at the B.A. stage stood me in good stead, particularly the chance that I got to cultivate my knowledge of Sanskrit and my knowledge of English literature. In those days the rules of the University required that a science student changing over to pure arts at the B.A. stage should pass in one of the subjects of the I.A. while in his 3rd year class. So, not only did I read Sanskrit for the B.A., I had also to start from the beginning and to complete the course in Sanskrit for the I.A.I., thus, became familiar with a wider range of Sanskrit classics. My choice of English literature both for the B.A. and M.A. did me a world of good. It equipped me for my role as a modern Indian writer. Even till now there are no good guide books in Oriya which would convey any cogent idea to a student of the Oriya language of the critical standards which are held in the universal acceptance in the world or would at all enable him to understand and to evaluate literature as it is done elsewhere; the only medium is to equip one-self by taking a regular course in English Language and Literature. That is probably the reason why, we find that since what is known as modern or to be more comprehensive non-medieval literature, is a result of the Impact of English literature on Indian minds. Those in Orissa who have produced

anything of worth in the nature of original Creative Oriya literature were either students of English literature at the University stage or those others who, while not being such students, took pains to cultivate a deeper acquaintance with English language and literature. I am reminded of an eminent Oriya Novelist, Shri Nityananda Mohapatra. As every-body knows he flung away his educational carer in order to join the freedom struggle. He left his classes while he was in the highest class in the High School. In course of time he flourished as a writer. When I met him in 1941 in the Koraput jail, I was then a small officer with headquarters at Koraput, He has his personal library of Zola, Moupassant and other foreign classics in their English versions which at least had not been wasted from him while he had been in a jail as a political offender. I felt proud of belonging to the tradition of the students of English Language and literature. There were tarring enemies before me. Bankim Chandra was a student of English Language and literature. So was D. L. Ray, the famous nationalist, poet and musician and so too was him son. In Orissa, although Radhanath did not read in any College, he passed his Intermediate Examination as a non-collegiate student and was reading very hard in order to sit for the B.A. Examination. His knowledge of English language and literature and his knowledge of Sanskrit were prodigious for his age. A very eminent figure of Radhanath's days was Gopal Ballava Das, author of the novel "Bhima Bhuian". He was an M.A. in English language and literature. He was acclaimed as one of the best critics at his time. He was a poet too. He created history by beholding radical views along with Sudam Chandra Nayak and Gouri Shankar Ray and few others were diametrically opposite to RadhanathGovinda Tripathy, famous for his essays was another such student, He also passed his M.A. from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Another student of English literature was Baishnab Charan Das, formerly I.G. of Orissa who was remembered for the fact that his "Mane Mane" was the first novel in Oriya which dealt with Freud's Psycho-analysis. He composed at least one poem which is as much remembered as his novel. Annada Shankar Ray was another student of English. He was an important member of what is known as the "Sabuja Group" and one of the finest critics of the period of his college days. Mayadhar Mansingh, our unforgettable lyric poet was another such student. But, like Annada Babu and Baishnab Chandra Das he read in the Patna College.

It was probably the year 1935. I was in my 5th year class. The Head of the English Department was, Prof. Niranjan Niyogi. Other Professors were Prof. K. P. Sinha, Prof. Krupanath Mishra, Prof. Girija Shankar Ray, Prof. Krutibas Samantaray and Prof. Janathan Mohanty. I do not remember, if Prof. Mohanty was taking classes in the M.A., Prof. Bireswar Chatterjee was with us for over a year. By 1934 he had already left. At

that stage Prof. K. P. Sinha suggested that we should have an English Association. The Association included students of M.A. Class and I also of the B.A. Hons. Class. Among 'my class friends, there were Nilamber Mishra of Sonepur state who had read with me right from the stage of Class V, Gokul Chandra Satpathy, who later became the D. P. I., Gopikrushna Das who was actually about 5 years senior to me in college, had discontinued, because he had suffered from "Kalaazer" and then had joined us in the 5th year, Sikruti Pattnaik (now Mohapatra), daughter of Laxmi Narayan Pattanaik of Ganjam, Suryanarayan, a student from Andhra and probably for some time Lokanath Panda, Kirtan Bihari Pattanaik were in the 5th year class, BasantaSatpathy was probably two years junior to Kirtan. Bidhu Bhusan Das and Prafulla Pati were probably in school and so our English association was inaugurated. We used to hold meetings and seminars. We tried to prepare a few papers. Some one of us would take up a topic, consult a Professor and get some reference, proceed further and build up a bibliography, then read the books concerned and other books by the same authors and so proceed to prepare his paper by weighing a knowledge acquired by study of books with the impressions gathered first hand by him by reading his subject closely. Prof. Krupanath Mishra was always a source of original ideas. He was himself an author being a Hindi poet and critic. He was an actor. He used to take keen interest in stage-craft and at the same time he was well-versed in modern literature bringing to bear upon it a very fresh and original judgement. It was then, that we used to practise making critical evaluations in the manner suggested by I. A. Richards. A poem by some anonymous writer would be copied on different slips; each of us would receive a slip and then we would sit down and attempt a critical evaluation.

In our own way we used to do a bit of research too. One great advantage that we possessed that our professors were not too modern and right from the start they were advising us to stand on our own legs; to study independently and to make the best of the situation. So, something came in handy cotton dried and dold out in a disc, we had to scan a list of the books the Kanika library do our own reading and to arrive at our own conclusions. If you find some old book in the Kanika library showing in the margin two tiny marks in pencil, two dots placest on each other you may be sure that that was a mark that put. The books in the Kanika library were the richest treasure that I had used during my six years in college. I remember, Prof. K. P. Sinha for the precise manner in which he used to impart his teaching. He would never miss; the essentials and he always had an eye on the examinations. He used to teach Shakespeare. Prof. Krupanathi Mishra used to teach Shakespeare too. But he used to act Shakespeare in the class rooms. His lectures were always inspiring, He stimulated more "through what he spoke. He also

tau modern poetry. He had specialised in language and although was not a student of English language (i. e. B Group) I made a thorough study of Philology under his guidance. Prof. Niranjan Niyogi used to teach romantic poetry in more ways than one. He was the very embodiment of Poetry. I remember going to the old man one morning and playing on a violin and dancing accompanied by his tiny grandchild. I can never forget the anger that he used to display when he tough Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden". He was of a very placid temperament. His every gesture bore the stamp of moderation and his mind and his face were a picture of serenity. But it was like an extinct volcano suddenly rupturing when he invaded against Kipling and his plea of "White Man's Burden". Prof. G. S. Ray was very particular about grammar: He believed in classicism. He had an impressive personality, immanating strength. He looked like a "Pahiliman". Prof. Krutibas Samaniaray was a truly affectionate soul. He had no affectations. He would often be found in the summer evening strolling in bare body waving an ancient red towel in front of him and fanning himself thereby. Just like me he was fond of pan and he was fond of idle characters. He had a fund of common sense. He knew that we relied on our own efforts in order to face examinations and often he would have a small chat with us or would quietly go to sleep.

A very strange thing happened while I was reading M.A. in the Ravenshaw College. A tantrika Babaji told me after I passed my B.A. that if I did not read in the M.A. class no one from the Ravenshaw College would appear in M.A. from my class. By the time the final examination came and I was in my 6th year. found that his prediction was true and that I was probably the only one who would appear at the M.A. from the Ravenshaw College in 1936. All the others except Nilambar Mishra had dropped. Nilambar Mishra had gone home and was plunged in grief, because his wife was dead. He had no intention of taking the examination and he did not deposited, he fees by the prescribed date. I went on writing persuasive letters to him. Finally, he came back. I took him to Professor Niranjan Niyogi and somehow by Prof. Niyogi's efforts the delay depositing the examination fees was condoned and he was allowed to appear and so both of us appeared and also passed out in 1936. It makes me every happy be reminded of those days although at times in the past to there were occasions when if I cited the Ravenshaw College, I would half, look at it from a distance and a bitter anguish would arise in me and I would think, "After all why did waste 6 years of the best period of my life here? How did it help me to get on in the world?" One learns the answer as one grows older. Life is beautiful, because it is uneven, changeful and colourful.

The abysses are as much necessary as the heights.

[Reprinted from the Golden Jubilee Souvenir]



In The Forties

Prof. P. S. Sundaram

(Prof. P. S. Sundaram M.A. (Madras) M.A. (Oxon) now Professor in English, Jaipur was 'the first Sonepur Professor of English, Ravenshaw College. He was subsequently Principal Balasore College, Member, Orissa Public Service Commission and Principal Bareilly College. He is an eminent scholar of English and an outstanding speaker. He was the President of All India English Teacher's conference for a term.)

As a nation we Indians are supposed to have no sense of time. It is not merely that, if a meeting is announced for 8 pm, we should be grateful if the speaker turns up not later than 8.30. Who ever heard of a barat party which did not exercise its privilege of keeping the bride's people waiting for at least a couple of hours? Our ancient literature is weakest in history. Our itihasas and puranas make mention without batting an eye-lid of kings who ruled for 60,000 years followed by their sons who ruled for a mere 11,000. Even if Varsha means in such a context a day instead of a year, 60,000 is a bit much. But then nobody seems to bother, and the pundits have always an esoteric explanation.

The celebration of birthdays and jubilees in such circumstances is a matter both for comment and commendation, provided of course we get our facts right and do not dissolve everything in a beautifully pink light. Time capsules are valuable, but only to the extent that they tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Ravenshaw College celebrated its centenary six years ago, in 1968. The Golden Jubilee of the Department of English did not fall due till 1972. This means that it took more than half a century after it came into being for the college to prepare students for the M.A. degree in English.

Even so, English was the first subject in which M.A. classes were opened in the college. For nearly a quarter of a century afterwards it was the only subject in which there were post-graduate classes. A generous gift of Rs. 1,71,500 from the Maharani of Sonepur enabled the establishment of a chair in English in 1922. The Sonepur Professorship of English was not however officially gazetted till 1945. And this was done to enable the then Head of the Department to continue to be on the staff of the college on a permanent basis, and in a salary scale higher than the then Orissa Class 1 scale.

Singularity is seldom an advantage. Universities and colleges gain by attracting a number of able men, and both students and teachers gain by inter-disciplinary contacts... When a student has done four years of college at Cuttack and found his contemporaries migrating to Patna or Allahabad for M.A. or M.Sc. in their subjects, he was also inclined to go with them. Only a selfish man would want to keep him back.

I have never believed that colleges and universities should be brought to every doorstep. Having gone on from one place to another myself and gained intellectually thereby, how could I stand in the way of anyone who, while professing a personal affection for me, nevertheless felt that after four years of Cuttack he must see a bit of the world? A rolling stone gathers no moss, but who in his senses would want to gather moss of all things rather than be bright and burnished?

When I took over as Head of the Department in January 1938, the number of students in M. A. Previous and Final taken together could not have exceeded an dozen: today they are more than a dozen dozen (152). The number of Honours students is 96 today as against 16 or 20 then.

As population explodes and more and more white-collar jobs are created, a university degree is thought of both as a status symbol and everybody's birth right. When one chooses a subject at the Honours or Post-graduate level, the presumption is that one has a special aptitude for it or considers it specially important. Ours is a land of paradoxes; and one of the most mystifying today is that while the centre and the states are set on displacing the "alien" language with one of "our own", more and more of our young men seem to think that if they could obtain proficiency in English their future would be much less bleak than if they did not.

The function of a university, as I see it, is to prepare its alumni for life as well as a living. We cannot live without bread, but bread is not the whole of life. A university is a place where one acquires a sense of values, and no one has discovered any value greater than those three – Beauty, Truth and Goodness.

Literary studies, unlike sociological or scientific, are an attempt to apprehend the beauty of what is said, written or portrayed: and beauty too often lies in the eye of the beholder. If you suffer from xenophobia…fear of the "foreigner"… you cannot possibly develop any affection for a language or a people different from your own. You will then consider it treason if anyone were to suggest that there are things in Shakespeare which you cannot find in Kalidasa. Your immediate retort will be, "But there are things in Kalidasa which one cannot find in Shakespeare"," and you will think that you have

thereby squashed your "opponent". If the university had done its job properly, it would have made you say, "What are those things 'in Shakespeare of which you are speaking?". But there are limits to what mere "education" can do.

Most people will agree that falling in love is not a matter of training. It is being increasingly realised that even correct and logical thinking is not a matter of training. "The truth is this to me and that to thée", said riddling Merlin. All religions glorify truth, but the habit of truth is a different matter.

The British are accused of hypocrisy by the continentals, but their most typical men liké Wilkes and Dr. Johnson could be brutally frank. "Clear your mind of cant", said Johnson, and from Langland to Bernard Shaw the English tradition has been to speak the truth and shame the devil. In this matter we may learn much not only from English literature but also from English public life.

And as for goodness, this is even less a matter to be taught than the apprehensions of beauty or the habit of truth. But a university can do much if, as Plato did, gave the first place to justice. Justice is not a matter with which only the courts are concerned: nor is it limited to what is legal. If a university student or teacher has not learnt to see the justice of these remarks and to act on it, he has not really profited by the so-called "higher education".

What, one may ask, has all this to do with the Department of English whose Golden Jubilee is being celebrated? Only this: that in celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Department of English, Ravenshaw College is also incidentally celebrating the Golden Jubilee of education at the highest level offered by the college. And true education is the preparation of a cultured, rational and just society.

As for the Department of English with which I was connected for more than a dozen years, the following item in an old issue of The Ravenshaw College Weekly should be of some interest (No. 25, Friday, the 16th September,1938):

The members of the English staff, and the students of the M.A. and Honours classes in English, met on Friday the 9th to discuss the feasibility of an English Association, which will help the academic pursuits and social intercourse of those specialising in the study of English, and will help also to organise the English Seminar, which at pre-sent works only for two months in the year during the Summer Vacation ... There is reason to believe that the English Association will soon be a reality.

The Association became a reality on the 10th of November with three secretaries:

Mr. Manmohan Misra B.A.

Mr. Bibhuti Bhusan Tripathi B.A.

Mr. Birendra Mohan Patnaik

From this it will be evident that the credit of starting an English Seminar goes to my predecessor Professor K. P. Sinha. The second side room to the left of the Kanika Library as one enters it bore the legend English Seminar Room" and had borne it before joined the college. But it was only used as a reading room by the M.A. and Honours students during the Summer Vacation. A substantial number of books were transferred to this room from the General Library, to be utilised by students throughout the year, soon after the English Association came into being in November, 1938. The Head of the Department was personally responsible to the Librarian for the safety of these books, and at the end of every academic year I checked up each individual item satisfied myself that all was well, and The Honours and M.A. students were trusted to take out the books, read them and put them back in the shelves: and in all the years that I was in charge, only one book was lost for which the cost was realised from the funds of the Association, and no book was damaged.

A subscription of 4 annas per month during term enabled the Association to have an Annual Tea and Group Photograph. I hope these photographs, framed and arranged year-wise in the Seminar room, are still there, as well as the portrait of Maharani Lady Parvati Devi of Sonepur which was rescued from the college lumber room, glazed and hung up at the entrance to the Seminar.

We did not have as many meetings of the Association as we could have wished. But I remember a wise crack I made on the occasion of a farewell party to Mr. V. V. John when he took over as the first Registrar of Utkal University, that while most of the other associations of thecollege had like a Greek tragedy a beginning, a middle and an end, each one of these consisting of one meeting our Association had a longer and a more varied connection between the beginning and the end. Mr. Justice Noor, Mr. Maher, Mr. L. P. Singh and Dr. Amiya Chakravarti were among those who attended some of our meetings and either lectured to us, presided over or participated in our deliberations. Professor Amaranatha Jha- also gave us a learned paper: and Dr. Narayana Menon's talk on "Script Reform", later printed in The Ravenshawvian, attracted the attention of some of the members of the Lok Sabha.

For the most part we were a shy and retiring lot. We made use of whatever talent available and put readily at our disposal. Principal Parija, under the auspices of the Association, gave a series of three lectures illustrated with lantern slides on Conan Doyle's The Lost World, a book prescribed for the Intermediate students. Mr. John gave a couple of lectures on Indian English. I myself gave one on English Prose Style, which was considered good enough to be given later on at the All-India English Teachers' Conference at Ajmer in 1952. Mr. N. S. Jagannathan, Mr. Bidhu Bhusan Das and Mr. Prafulla Kumar Pati who joined the English staff in 1944 did much, along with Mr. John, to liven our proceedings.

Mr. Das was able to attract the attention of F. R. Leavis to our Association, critic is one of the prized possessions of the English Seminar. The credit for this is due wholly to BidhuBhusan.

This, in brief, is the story of the English Department and of the English Association of Ravenshaw College from 1938 to 1950. As Professor in charge of the Library, I was able, with the meagre grants at our disposal, to procure books and back numbers of journals not easily available in bigger and more imposing libraries, for example, a complete set of the S. P. E. tracts. With the help of some of my colleagues; it was possible to prepare card indexes of articles in journals like *The Times Literary Supplement, Essays and Studies, The London Mercury, Modern Language Notes, The Poetry Review*. Those were the days when not much premium was set on research and American letters and scholarship had not become a powerful influence.

The changes during the second half of the fifty years we are celebrating are, and are bound to be, very much greater than during the first half. The mere growth in numbers of staff and students is a sufficient indication. Acceleration and snow-balling are cultural as well as physical phenomena. We, who are old, do well to stepback and salute the gathering momentum and a letter from the eminent.

[Reprinted from the Golden Jubilee Souvenir]



Rosy Reminiscences

Harihar Mishra

(Sri Harihar Misra, M.A. was the first Post Graduate student of English in Orissa to get State scholarship for higher studies in England. He was one of the staff of the Department of English Ravenshaw College. An eminent educationist of Orissa, he retired as the Joint D.P.L., Orissa.)

The year was 1925. It was a land-mark in the life-history of many of us in the Ravenshaw College. That year we passed the four-year B.A. Degree examination and qualified for admission to M.A. classes. The only M.A. classes at the Ravenshaw College were for English.

NatabarSahu (Retd. I.A.S.), Muhammad EnamurRaheman (Retired Commissioner of Income-Tax) Harihar Mahapatra (Retired Judge, Patna High Court) and I secured Honours in English at the B.A. examination. Late Kshitish Chandra De, GopabandhuMisra (Retired District Judge & Chairman O. P. S. C), Gopal Chandra Das (Retired Judge, Orissa High Court), Late Sudhansu Mohan Mukherji and KalindiCharanPanigrahi (Padmabhusan) who passed in the same year were, along with us, likely to muster again in the College. I would have been utterly despondent of continuing with M.A. had it not been for the fact that I stood the best chance of obtaining the only one Post-Graduate Scholarship for the College.

The M.A. Class in English was started in the Ravenshaw College in July 1922 consequent upon a munificent donation of Rs. 50,000/-. by Sir Biramitroday Singh Deo, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Sonepur who had also instituted the Sonepur Peace Celebration Medal for the Best Graduate from Sonepur State, or if there was none from Sonepur, from one of the then twenty six Orissa Feudatory States.

The first batch of students passing the M.A. examination in 1924 consisted of three candidates:-Nagendranath Mitter, Damodar Das, and Late Amarendra Ballay Dey. In the second batch of 1925 Late Govinda Tripathi topped the list of successful candidates of the Patna University. The others who passed were late Promode Chandra Chatterji, late Uma Charan Patnaik, Brajasundar Mahanti and Haricharan Mukherjee. In the third batch of examinees in 1926, those who passed were late Prafulla Kumar Tripathy, late Jagannath Misra and Anathbandhu Roy. From amongst us who were looking forward to the pleasure of being together again in July 1925, only Enamur, Gopabandhu and I

joined the M.A. Class. A refreshing addition to our class was Miss Shantabala Sinha who subsequently married one of our friends Sarat Chandra Mukherji (Retired I.A.S) preferring the bliss of matrimony to the hazards of studying English literature among aliens (Sarat along with Annada Sankar Ray had left us after Intermediate to join the Patna College. Both secured the distinction of First Class Honours in Economics and English respectively from the Patna College in 1925). I secured the post-Graduate scholarship which eased my financial strait and released my spirits. I obtained also the Sonepur Peace celebration medal.

As during the two-years M.A. course (1925-26 and 1926-27), the fifth year and the sixth year classes were often combined for the purpose of instruction in many prescribed periods of English literature, I must mention the names of some of those who took admission in 1926, They were Muralidhar Mahanti (Barister-at-Law), Anant Prasad Panda (Retired Joint Director, Cooperative Societies), Suresh Chandra Das (Mayurbhanj), Damodar Mardaraj, Nidhiram Misra and Mohini Mohan Mukherji. Enamur, Gopa and I joined also the Preliminary-in Law Class of the B. L. Course and passed the Preliminary-in-Law examination held in July 1926.

Admission to the English M.A. Class had the inevitable effect of creating in us an attitude of superiority and near-aggressiveness. The reasons are not far to seek.The College roll strength was 516. The two hostels, East Block and West Block with accommodation for 384 boarders and the Muhammadan hostel with seatsfor 32 boarders were full. And we were at the top. We could go to the dreaded presence of the Principal Mr. Lambert whose rare smile was constantly sought afterbut seldom obtained even by the Senior teaching staff. We could even cajole him to give us pass marks in the one-period-a week precis class; he knew well we knew that his forte was not English language & literature but Natural Science. We could discuss Quiller Couch's jargon with Mr. Ouston Smith whose reported bachelor hood intrigued us. We could crack a joke with Mr. P.O. Whitlock who asked us time and again that we should learn to appreciate the beauty of "Canterbury Tales" and the virility of Don Juan rather than the lyric phantasy of Shelley, Keats and the dull pseudo-philosophic mutterings of Wordsworth. We could go to sleep when Professor Gopal Chandra Ganguly rivetted his eyes on the pages of our poetry text or Professor Barada Kanta Chatterji closed his eyes while haranguing us in the character of Heroic Simile in "Sohrab and Rustum". We could get square with Professor Krutibasa Samantarai who had held us in awe for four long years. We occasionally had tea with Professor J. C. Ghosh freshly come from Oxford with B.Litt. degree.

We could always coax Professor Girija Shankar Roy to give us most of his time in teaching the intricacies of Grimm's Law and Verner's Law. We could enjoy privileges in the Kanika Library by brow-beating Damodar Misra, the poor self-effacing Librarian who had the reputation of once "Omitting his umbrella".

We could have our articles of doubtful excellence published in the Ravenshawvian; and we could occupy unchallenged, the front lench in a College debate. Wecould make a show of assisting Professor Arataballav Mohanti in his labours for Prachi Publications. We could assume the pose of advisers to unsuspecting under-graduates. We could gain for ourselves leading roles in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the College in 1926 by bragging of our knowledge of the history of the College from the days of the starting of a small school with 86pupils, of its being raised to the status of a high school from January 1868 and to that of a first grade College from 1876.

But there were several weighty matters and influences which blunted our 'edge while sharpening our wit. Inside the province, these influences were projecting theireffect in the course of the past four years in the College. They mainly centred round Gandhi's, non-violent non-Cooperation under the leadership of UtkalmaniGopabandhu, Kulabrudha Madhusudan Das's fight for Sudhansubala Hazra's enrolment as a Pleader, and his resignation from the post of Minister for Local Self-Government in Bihar & Orissa and his insolvency. We were affected by the heroic efforts of a band of sensitive young men who formed the "Sabuj Sahitya Samiti" tousher in new forms in poetry and prose literture. Outside Orissa, Gandhi was out of prison, but, the atmosphere was charged with tension. In March, 1922, Gandhi had

been sentenced to six years imprisonment by a British Judge Sir Robet Broomfield. who treated him with greatdignity and courtesy. Sir Robeet had observed:-

"The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless it is impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely tohave to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even there who differfrom you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble, even saintly life......There are probably few people in India who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any Government, to leave you at liberty. But it is so ... I should like to say that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I..." Following his illness and a Surgical operation, Gandhi had been released from prison on the 5th February, 1924, the Government having unconditionally remitted the unexpired portion of his sentence. He resumed the editorship of Young India and

Navajivan and he went on pouring forth his thoughtson non-violence, reconstruction of Society, and removal of untouchability. The Indian National Congress had split into two factions and there were communal disturbances. In Ganjam the renounced and redoubtable fighter and leader and editor or the "Asha" weekly newspaper, Sashibhusan Rath, got elected for the Second time to the legislative Council of Madras along with Biswanath Das and Parsurama Patro. (Sir A. P. Patro). C. R. Das died at Darjeeling on the 16th June 1925. Mahatma Gandhi visited Cuttack on the 16th August 1925 to see the Utkal Tannery owned and managed by Madhusudan Das with heavy loss, and to try to save it from liquidation. Gandhiji also came again to Orissa towards the end of 1925 and extensively toured on foot, a large part of the province. He noted "death like quiet" in the country side and characterised the place of British administration as "the peace of the grave" All these and other events deeply touched our minds, and very often there arose a conflict between our plans for the future and the inadequacy of the means for putting the places into effect. The desire to communicate as an outlet for, pentup feelings was strong. Our favourite song then were following lines from Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind".

"Be then Spirit fierce

My Spirit; Be thou me, Impetuous one

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe

Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth"

But our immaturity made us quiet, and we learnt to contemplate fulfilments in the works of Rabindranath Tagore

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free

Where eternal striving stretches it arms towards its perfection

Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let myCountry awake"

By November, 1927, the British Government announced the appointment of the Simon Commission but we were out of the College in September 1927 I left for London to study in the Kings College with a state Scholarship. The information that I had been awarded the Rai Bahadur Janahinath Bose prize for being the best all round student in 1925 and 1926 reached me three months later.

I had the good fortune of coming back to the College as a Lecturer in 193 of being again with many of my venerable teachers and of teaching some of my old hostel mates. I spent the best. days of my life during the period of my association with the M.A. Classes of the Ravenshaw College.

[Reprinted from the Golden Jubilee Souvenir]



The Memoir of an Immemorable Man

Prafulla Kumar Pati
Former Professor and Head
Department of English
Ravenshaw College,
Cuttack

Dr. Bijay Kumar Das has made a request that I should write my memoir, since the Post-Graduate Department of English is going to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee. I was associated with Ravenshaw College for 25 years and with the Post-Graduate wing of the Department of English for 21 years. (This includes the three years of study leave, which I took as a Reader for doing M.A. and Ph.D. courses in U.S.A.). It is only meet and proper that I participate fully in the celebration. Yet, I am in two minds, whether to write my memoir or not to write it.

Though I was associated with the Post-Graduate Department of English for a long period, feel, my contribution to the evolution of the department is negligible. My memory of the department is precious for me, but I do not think, it will be of much interest to others. Moreover, if I am honest in the presentation of my memoir, I have gotto resurrect some unpleasant memories. Since however, I love the department and impulse rather than reasoning, should prevail in matters concerning love, I have decided to write my memoir.

As I walk down the memory lane, I fondlyremember all my teachers. I will mention the names of just a few of them, with apologies for others. They are Professor P. S. Sundaram (his incisive criticalcomments always hit the nail on the head), Professor V. V. John (his teachings broadened my outlook), and Professor Girija Shankar Ray (his sincerity as ateacher was exemplary). I remember my friends Prof. Bidhubhusan Das, and Prof. Nanda Kishore Mishra, We joined Ravenshaw College almost at the sametime. Together we formed a trio; and hope, Nanda Babu doesn't mind my saying so, with Bidhu Babu we have performed a life long duet. I remember younger colleagues Prof. Srimat Sahu, Prof. Sarbeswar Das, and Prof. Trilochan Misra. The remembrance of Prof. A. P. O'Brien, who, alas, is not with us, also comes to my mind. And then, suddenly, I find myself in the midst of a crowd-the focus of many, many students appear on screen of my mind; and I am happy and proud to say that all of them were and are

equally dear to me. It is through them that my life has achieved it's fulfillment. It will be no exaggeration, if I say that the Post-graduate department of English has been the radiating centre for the academic, literary, and cultural renaissance of Orissa. It has produced excellent teacher profound scholars and thinkers, dedicated research workers, and capable administrators.

Teaching, for us, was not a duty to be discharged, but an act of love. We looked up-on our students as partners in the adventurous and exciting exploration of the world of knowledge. Nothing has given me as much pleasure as a remark of Dr. G. K. Das, Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University. He told me recently "Sir, we received such teaching in the Department of English, Ravenshaw College, that we have been second to none in the World in regard to proficiency in English language and literature".

I referred to some unpleasant memories which came to the surface of my mind, when thought of writing this memoir. On second thought, I have decided to keep that to myself, since these pertain to a friend and a student of mine. I assure that my love for them has remained unaffected by what they did to me.

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



A Glimmer of Joy

Sarbeswar Das
Former Professor and Head
Department of English
Ravenshaw College
Cuttack

A glimmer of joy appeared in this unquiet twilight of my life when I learnt that the post-graduate Department of English is going to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee.

I have been associated with the Department as a teacher - a Lecturer, a Reader and finally as the Professor for long seventeen years.

Memories crowd the corridors of mind, memories of events and experiences, of my loving teachers and dear colleagues, of innumerable students: mostly loving and adoring and some haughty and questioning - and yet all close to my heart memories sweet and sour, memories that make me wishfully nostalgic longing for the times gone by and memories that hurt me and torture me even now - memories of dream of scholarship and creative activity cherished with ardour dreams that have eluded fulfilment saddening my moments of retired life. Memory is a release, memory is abondage. But for all that I would not give up the memory of my days in the P.G. Department, Ravenshaw College, with which I identified myself for long long years. I love to remember the dawning illumination in the faces of students as they listenedto my talks on Shelley or Shakespeare, Yeats or Eliot, the creative sparks of students as revealed in their poems, the sharp sensitiveness with which they analysed literary works of the present or the past, the intellectual challenge some of them posed for me refusing to conform to what I said. I finally remember the small English seminar room in the south eastern side of Kanika library building where even as I talked of Milton would float in the sweet voice of Prof. Jayakrishna Misra or Prof. Gouri Kumar Brahma teaching medieval Oriya poetry to the post-graduate students of Oriya in another similar room located on the northern side of the veranda. I remember the classes on Essay that I used to take and how when I did not agree with Ian Jack's viewsthat satire could the considered as great poetry, a seminar meeting was held to discuss the point, I being dubbed as incorrigible romantic in any approach to literature. I remember too the unique seminar meeting held to discuss the views of F. R. Leavis disparaging *Othello* in the Physics Lecture Theatre of Ravenshaw College which was over crowded with students and

teachers not merely of the English Department of Ravenshaw College but also of other colleges at Cuttack. Students of other departments too attended that seminar meeting occasioned by and large by my sticking to the Bradleyan romantic interpretation of Othello's character and refusing to accept the views of Leavis (who, by the way sent a hand writtenletter to the secretary of the English association on the occasion of an Annual Day Celebration). We teachers disagreed with one another in our views on author and movements in literature but there was no personal rancour though the debate used to be keen. I remember disagreeing with the views of Leavis expressed in his 'Revalutions' on the great romantics whom he did not accept as really great and theviews of Eliot too on similar lines on the romantics particular his views on Milton, which I have lived to see him by and large recant in his older days. I couldn't persuade myself to be carried away by the school of criticism that debunked the poets and poetry adored for many decades, could not always appreciate the anti-Victorianism than coloured so much of what was said to be modern outlook.

Yes, the Department meant so much to me, not merely intellectually, but emotionally on a very personal level. I remember that when I received a serious head injury in 1969 ne to the police lathi charge in the Ravenshaw College ground leading to heavy bleeding, I wanted my students and colleagues to carry me to Room No. 3 where the post-graduate classes in English were being held. I was laid on the table there for sometime before Iwas caried to my quarters.

When I started teaching in the post-graduateclass in 1951 there were hardly half-a-dozen students, most of them very bright and sincere. Timidly I started and slowly but steadily gained confidence. By the time I became the Professor, the number of students had risen to 88, Ravenshaw College was till the early fiftiesthe only college in Orissa with a post-graduate department. The English Department is the oldest post-graduate department in Orissa. When Utkalamani Gopabandhu proposed in the Bihar Orissa Council that a Post-Graduate Departnment in English should bestarted in Ravenshaw College, he had envisaged that the department would prove the nucleus of separate University of Orissa.

Through years the teachers and students of the P.G. Department of English have not only assiduously studied English language and literature, but have richly contributed to the development of Oriya literature. The Department has been the breeding ground of modernism and what some choose to call post-modernism in Oriya poetry in particular and Oriya literature in general.

The budding poets of the past, some of whom I at times snubbed for their daring experiments in language and verse pattern and occasional lapses a into what appeared to my rather conventional mind as rather vulgar, have blossomed into poets of great power and beauty and received awards, some of them the very higher, at the state and national level. In the fields of drama, short stories and novels, many of the old students have moved on to 'fresh fields and pastures new'.

In my student days hardly anybody dared to write poems in English. But today so many write poems in English with ease and facility and some of the old students of the Department have received recognition at the national and international level. In the field of novel and short stories in English signal contribution has been made by some.

In the field of scholarship too the department appears to have made remarkable progress. Since teaching became research-oriented and the U.G.C. laid stress on research qualification, many teachers have achieved Ph.D. and D.Litt. degrees in Literature. And the field of research has widened covering English literature wherever produced and not merely In Great Britain, Besides, a few have carried on research in the field of Comparative literature and some have usefully studied aesthetics of India and the world.

The syllabus has considerably changed with the inclusion of numerous special papers. In fields other than the academic some of the old students have shone and brought glory to the Department by their remarkable creative activity, their contribution to literature.

Even an old fossil like me has felt the stirring of a new life on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee and I am sure that the teachers and students of the Department must be feeling a unique upsurge of vigour and enthusiasm which would persuade them to extend further the horizon of knowledge and creative activity and lead the Department to greater glory in the new century which we will march into in a couple of years.

I extend my hearty wishes to the teacher andstudents of the Department on this occasion and wish them all success and prosperity.

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



Down Memory Lane

Nanda Kishore Mishra
Former Professor and Head,
Department of English,
Ravenshaw College,
Cuttack

My association with the English Department of Ravenshaw College was spread over a period of nearly twenty-five years. Of these six years as a student and the rest as teacher-of course, intermittently, as I had to serve elsewhere on transfer.

There is nothing which can be remotely described as exciting in the even tenor of a teacher's life. However, I still recall with pleasure some experiences of these formative years. Today, few will probably believe that there were only five of us-including my humble self-In the Post-Graduate class. I am not going to dwell long upon my experiences in the Honours classes, but in those classes I was firstcalled upon to make my acquaintance with the great English poets like Shakespeare, Milton, Keats and Coleridge and novelists like Thomas Hardy. Wehad to study the History of English Literature to develop a sense of perspective which, I belleve is an indispensable part of the study of literature. We also had to read Raleigh's excellent monograph on Shakespeare. It should be mentioned in this context that we had to study Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, *Hamlet* and *Othello* at the B.A. stage.

This brings me to my studies in the P.G. classes. We had to attend about eight classes in the week. One paper was entrusted to each member of the Department. Prof. P. S. Sundaram was the Head of Department. His teaching was meticulous andsystematic. He would deal with the text thoroughly and at the end give us a critical estimate of the poet and his works. But a perfect contrast to him was provided by Prof. V. V. John. I do not think in his whole life as a teacher he covered a single bookfrom the beginning to the end. He was concerned with something more valuable. His lectures were aimed at creating in the student a taste for the literature of the period and leave the rest to him. Bubbling with wit and humour- he would sometimes make fun of himself - he embodied in himself the spirit of the eighteenth Century. He might have come from the pages of the Restoration Comedy. Dryden, Pope and Congreve were not dead authors but were transformed into living men. Then we had Prof. Narayan Mohan De. A poet himself, he was in charge of the Romantic Revival. In those days when the study of compared literature was not heard of Prof. De would compare Radhanath with Wordsworth and talk about the latter's influence on the Oriya poet. On the whole, attending those classes

was an exhilarating experience. We were left very much to ourselves, which was a good thing, after all. We had plenty of time to read whatever we could lay our hands on in the Kanika Library as it then was. Alas! Now no more. I had the misfortune to see it disintegrating towards the end of my life as a teacher in the Ravenshaw College.

After these ramblings which may be of little interest to many readers, I bring myself to my life as a teacher. The early years were difficult, if not of diffidence. Every morning I used to do my reading as if I was going to sit for an examination. Amongmy students there were some who were very sincere and well-informed. My only concern was that I should not be found wanting when I would enter the class room a habit which I kept up till very end. Some of my erstwhile teachers like Prof. Sundaram and John became my colleagues and some of my classmateslike Prof. Bidhubhusan Das and Prof. P. K. Pati joined the Department as teaches. The workload in those days was heavy- twenty-one classes per week, butwe were young and enthusiastic and did not mind.But, times changed and towards the end, illness and the resultant atrophy was bound to take its toll. The most enjoyable years of my life as a teacher coveredabout ten years from 1957 to 1967. I was in charge of Elizabethan Drama and it was a pleasure to dwell upon its background and evolution, beginning with Marlowe and coming to an end with Webster. The students of the P.G. class were interested and responsive; that brought out the best in the teachers. Many of them are now occupying very responsible positions in the administrative set up. I do not know, if they recall their experience as students.

I returned to the English Department after a lapse of eight years in 1976 and I had five more years of service left. On my return I noticed a sea-change. The P.G. classes were overflowing with regular and irregular casual (i) students. The number of teachers had gone up to nearly twenty-five. Ofthe students, not more than ten to fifteen per cent were really interested in literature though many of them I was told, used to write poetry. The system had also changed. There was little teaching and lets of learning. The time was taken up in holding testsand examinations, leading to needless suspension of classes. Of course, there was plenty of paper work the more, the better. After all, records were to bemaintained. Many of the teachers were young and enthusiastic. They were very kind and co-operative. I do not know how I would have run the Departmentwithout their help. There were some who could be described as 'characters'. They leant a touch of variety, but their antics were not of the enjoyable sort. I won't mention any names, that would not be proper, particularly, when this may fall into their respectable hands. These last years, darkened by my personal misfortunes and drudgery, I would very much like to forget. After all, life is like that and one has to take it in his stride. When the time came, I heaved sigh of relief and left. In conclusion, I may say with some satisfaction that I have done the Department some service and those whom I served - both students and teachers - know it.

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



A Memoir

Professor Shrimat Sahu
M.A. (Utkal), M.A. (Bristol)
Professor of English & Principal (Retd.)
G. M. College, Sambalpur

With immense pleasure I look back and recall those seven years of glorious life in Ravenshaw College from 1939 to 1946, the first six as a student and the last one as teacher. And in that conglomerate of glory stands out most vividly the Department of English of which I was a proud member during my four years of Honours and M.A. studentship and one year of teachership. For many many years Englishwas the only Department In Ravenshaw, College having Post-Graduate teaching facility, and as such it was reckoned as the Queen among the various Departments of the college. The English Seminar meetings were always special occasionswhere the students and teachers worked like an intimate close- knit family. These meetings also used to be attended by a sprinkling of other students who were Interested in English Literature. The standard of English was exceptionally high. A mere pass degree in M.A. served as a sure passport to success in life. In 1944, Bidhu Bhusan Das had secured a First Class in English from Patna University (to which Ravenshaw Collegewas affiliated till 1944) after 16 years of no-first-class era. In the first year Annual Examination of 1940, I was awarded 56 marks in English (how poor I onewould say) by Professor Girija Shankar Ray. This so impressed Dr. (then, Shri) Ramanath Mohanty, the tabulator who was also the Assistant Superintendentof our hostel, East Hostel, that he came down to my room to congratulate me on this, and not on my marks in Logic in which I had secured 91 marks. Those were different days - glorious, awesome, scary. To us students, the teachers were crowned with an aura - reverential, mysterious. At the time of the spectacular strike and Examination boycott of 1940 over the removal of Union Jack and unfurling the National flag, our Student Leader Nilamoni Routroy warned, "Not a word or look disrespect to any teacher under any circumstance!" The modern equivalent of such injunction is "Brother-in-law Mohanty (or Das, or...) fumed and fretted when, after stubbing my cigarette outside the room, I entered the class only five minutes late!"

The English Department of Ravenshaw College has great traditions. It was headed by eminent Professors like K. P. Sinha, P. S. Sundaram, Bidhu Bhusan Das, A. P. O'Brien, Prafulla Kumar Pati, to name only a few. The Staff, again to name a few, had equally

eminent persons like Kruttibas Samantray, Narayan Mohan De, Girija Shankar Ray, V. V. John, Mayadhar Mansingh and Nanda Kishore Mishra.

I had the good fortune to join the Staff of English Department immediately after passing my M.A. Examination in 1945-in fact, one week before the results were published. And during my one-year service in Ravenshaw College, I had as my students-Akshaya Biswal, Altaf Hussain, Manmath Nath Das, Bighnaraj Patel, Naba Kishore Mishra, Prabhat Nalini Das, Nilakantha Ratha, Tribikram Pati, Trilochan Pradhan, Gostha Bihari Kanungo, and Gajendranath Acharya. Can compile another such list?

I wish the English Department of Ravenshaw College continued glory!

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



Look Back in Love

Prof. Trilochan Misra
Former Vice-Chancellor
Jagannath Sanskrit University
Puri

I get nostalgic as I look back on my days in the English Department of Ravenshaw College of which I was a part for almost half of my tenure as a teacher, i.e., from 1952 to 1968. Let me at the outset mention that from boyhood till the formal completion of my academic career, I had studied all along under Calcutta university, for we then owned a house in Calcutta. At that time there were only four Government Colleges in Orissa Ravenshaw College being the foremost; but I had not seen anyone of them. My first visit to Ravenshaw College dates back to July 1948 when I had to apply for a lectureship under Government Pandit Lingaraj Misra, the then Education Minister and a savant of the famous Satyabadi academic tradition, who had sent for me from our village, was kind enough to give me an option to choose either Ravenshaw or Balasore College (later renamed as F. M. College) for my ad hoc posting. That was the first time when I went round Ravenshaw College.

At the first sight I was impressed by the college building and the academic atmosphere, as anyone should be. I also liked the library. But, somehow, to my young, Insatiable mind the P.G. Department of English that day seemed to be rather an apology for the same. On the right flank of the old structure of Kanika Library facing towards the Physics Department, there were two small adjoining rooms like two cubicles opening out to the verandah, accessible through three rising steps. These two rooms used to accommodate In those days the P.G. Departments of two major literatures, Oriya and English. Two neatly pruned Kamin! Shrubs, one on either side of the steps, stood like two green garden umbrellas as if to suggest a demarcating line of seclusion. The room to the playground side was the cradle of the P.G. Department of English which had had its birth in 1922, a year significant to students of English literature for the publication of three literary milestones of our century- The Waste Land, Jacob's Room and Ulysses. Inside that small room, to the left of the leacher's table these stood a wooden almirah containing some 200 books, not very up to date volumes. Four of five bench-cum-desks were laid in single rows providing accommodation for about a dozen students.

The room was being used as classroom for the 5th and 6th year classes with necessary adjustment in the time-table and also as the reading room after the classes were over. Coming to choose my place of work, that day I became a bit confused. While choosing between the seen and the unseen, a fond chooser usually goes for the latter. I also made the same mistake when I opted for the unseen college at Balasore of which I had no idea. Maybe, it was an effect of homesickness, for Balasore is situated midway between my village home and our second home in Calcutta.

I felt quite at home at Balasore and grew popular. But what is relevant to mention here is that at F. M. College I got the privilege of working with two renowned scholars, who were erstwhile Professor's of English at Ravenshaw College - V. V. John and P.S. Sundaram; they were successively my Principals. I found Prof. John to be an agreeable witty scholar and a bit of a maverick with a remarkable flair for good humour. Prof. Sundaram on the other hand was quite stern, a redoubtable scholar, let me say, of the classical English tradition; and of course a martinet in every sphere of activity. By my student like association with these two veterans, who liked me, I could get a feel of the time-honoured tradition of English teaching at Ravenshaw College.

While at Balasore, I acquired self-confidence as a teacher and had the opportunity to handle the entire Hons. course. In course of time as the inchoate desire to handle higher classes gathered strength in my young mind, I started realising what opportunities I had initially denied to myself. But, however, luck smiled on me when happened to meet Ravenshaw's new Professor of English one March afternoon of 1952 in a meeting of examiners presided over by him in Burdwan House, Cuttack. Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das, the incumbent, presently the grand old doyen of English studies in Orissa, was then a young man of just 30. Let me, with an apology to his good self, give our young students a pen portrait of that 'happy scholar unwearied' as I saw him that day. He wore a cream-coloured rayon suit (probably his favourite dress in youth) with a long tie and rimless specs broad. He was marked by his broad forehead, aquiline nose and 'flashing eyes' and he made himself conspicuous all the more by his measured accent, firmness of tone and above all the professorial stance in all that he said. I am glad that he spoke to me of his own accord after the meeting was over. It is he who brought about my transfer to his Department in Julythe same year.In 1952, we were only five members on the staff. In addition to Prof. B. Das who was the Head, the members were Amos Peter O'Brien, Prafulla Kumar Pall, Sarbeswar Das and myself. Prof. B. Das has all along

been serious in teaching. I found inhim an erudite scholar and a voracious reader. I think, even today he is the most widely read scholar and a powerful thinker too. By his teaching and occasionalspeeches he used to inspire awe among the students and the staff and we the younger people used to run to him for consultation whenever we needed. Prof. Das used to conduct the P.G. seminars admirably and was often assertive in course of the deliberations, not hesitating to snub any participant who spoke beside the point; that was him. His second, Dr. A. P. O'Brien was a popular teacher and a loving and god-fearing man. He was the oldest among us andfor that matter appeared a bit sensitive at times. In the classroom he was lucid and simple in explaining the text and used to highlight the important portions by asking students to underline them. He used to sum up his teaching point-wise, counting the points by the fingers. Dr. O'Brien also excelled in making running commentaries on sports events in the college annual sports. One of his idiosyncrasies I may add apologetically, was to intersperse English conversation with occasional Indian words and cliches, which endeared him to students for the Jocular effect, e.g. Likho man, or else lalbatti (Take down, man or else you have to close down your business.) We are sorry to have lost him for ever. Prof. P. K. Pati, another great teacher and a class-mate of Prof. B. Das was of a different type-all reasoning and no emotion throughout his teaching. A matter-of-fact man, he was wise and friendly, but conspicuously calm and composed, seldom allowing his exterior to betray the tenderness inside. As a teacher he was practical being closely confined to the subject matter and basing his approach on logic and common sense rather than being carried away by the opinions of critics. He was known as an astute analyser of the text; besides, he was an excellent debater remarkable for his ingenuity. The fourth among us was Sarbeswar Das, a close friend of mine. As a teacher, Prof. Das appears to me as a vestigeof the gurukul tradition and a replica of the Satyabadi type of scholar-clad in khadi, idealistic, kind-hearted and benevolent. An exponent of plain living and highthinking, used to wear his learning in simplicity and keep his heart ever transparent. He loved all students en masse, reacted to their suffering and shed tears at their sorrows. And they in return recognised In him the father figure of a teacher. Along with these four I should also mention Dr. Debendra Chandra Misra, popularly known as Dr. D. C., the then Professor of Economics and a personal friend of Professors B. Das and P. K. Pati. Though not a member of the English Department, he used to take interest in our extracurricular activities and extend fellowship to us in those early days.

The staff strength of our Department started increasing from 1953 when it became 6; the next year it was 7 and by 1968 when I left, it was 15. Brilliant was the galaxy of teachers who came to Join us in course of these years. Outstanding among those who left the Department were Prof. B. Das (1958-9) and Prof. O'Brien (1963), the former on an assignment to Nepal and the latter on his superannuation. Prof. P. K. Pati and Prof. Sarbeswar Das went abroad for higher study towards 1960; the former returned to the Department around 1963-4 latter Joined S. C. S. College and came two years after.

Let me speak of the teachers, with whom I had the privilege to work during my service at Ravenshaw College, in two broad groups, say the senior and the junior, although at this distance of time, the distinction is not tenable. However, to melt is significant, for while I hold the former in proper regard, I look upon the latter in love and affection.

Foremost among my senior colleagues was prof. Nandakishore Mishra, a batch mate of Professor B. Das and P. K. Pati. He joined us in the late 50s and was our sometime Head of the Department in the 60s after the retirement of Dr. O'Brien. To use a single epithet, we considered him as an 'embodiment of Intellectual dignity', an epitome of decorum and good sense. Usually reticent, he used to give the right opinion at the right moment if and when required. Next to him in age was Prof. BaidyanathMisra who Joined us perhaps in 1955. A diligent teacher and a friendly colleague, he was known for his impeccable sense of duty. Another senior teacher who came to the Department around 1957 was our friend C. V. N.

Das who was quite pally with almost all of us so much so that younger colleagues used in Joke to call him "Sir CV'. He possessed a fine sensibility and a good sense of humour, but showed even in common talk a weakness for nineteenth century diction. Next to him and almost a contemporary of mine was Prof. Harendra Prasad Mohanty known for his soundness of Judgment, sharpness of mind and critical acumen. Mrs. Prabhat Nalini Das, a brilliant scholar who laterbecame professor of English, Utkal University also worked with us for a stint.

There were four other senior teachers who worked in the Department in the 60s. All of them had originally come from outside Orissa to join O. E.S. around 1945-46 when the new colleges were set up under the Jurisdiction of the newly started UtkalUniversity. They were T. E. Jayaraman, Khitish Chandra Deb, K. P. A. Pillal and

Thakur Chandra Nandi. Except Mr. Nandi, all of them stayed only for a short while.Mr. Jayaraman, a reputed teacher, taught for about a year around 1960. Mr. K. C. Deb, a brilliant scholar from Calcutta University worked for a couple of yearsin the early 60s until he was transferred to G. M. College in 1963. Mr. Pillal had but a stint on the eve of his retirement In 1964. T. C. Nandi who had come over to Rajendra College under its private regime in the 40s finally came here under transfer from Parlakhemendi College sometime about 1960 am faught for a few years prior to his retirement. Nandi was a hard-working teacher and endeare himself to students for his diligence.

The younger group I have referred to comprised our own ex-students. Seniormostn among them was Jatindra Mohan Mohanty, who joined it after doing his M.A. from our College in 1953 and became, as I have said earlier, the 6th member of our staff. While a student, he had edited an anthology of modern Oriya poetry with a definitive introduction as professor, author and critic, Prof. Mohanty has made his mark and taken retirement as Professor of English, Utkal University some two years back. Two years after Mohanty, in 1955 Deba Prasad Patnaik joined us as a lecturer. Young and affable, Patnaik helped us a great deal when we organised the All India English Teachers' Conference of 1955-56 at Ravenshaw College. Prof. S. C. Deb of Allahabad University was the President of the Conference that year; Prof. Amalendu Bose, the General Secretary and Prof. B. Das, the Local Secretary. Deba Prasad Patnaik is at present a US based academic and a powerful Indian English poet. Patnaik's brilliant class mate Gour Kishore Das, the first class first of 1955 batch, had been posted to G. M. College. Sambalpur, where he had taught his first two years before returning to his alma mater in 1957. He worked with us in two instalments, availing a scholarship in U.K. in between, and finally switched over to Delhi University where he worked as Professor. As a person scholar and educationist, Prof. G. K. Das is an example to be emulated by the younger people. Presently he is Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University and we consider him the pride of our Department. In 1958 after doing his M. A. Qamruddin Khan Joined us. Anagreeable young man and good organiser, he worked on our staff at different times and he became Professor and Head in the 80s. At present he is Vice-Chancellor, Berhampur University.

Round about 1962 we received three young lecturers: Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, who came on transfer from Khallikote College, and Satyanarayan Mohanty and Harekrushna Patnaik, both of whom did their Master's Degree with us in 1961. Dr. P. K. Mohanty became Professor of English and Principal, Ravenshaw Autonomous

College in the early 90s and has switched over to journalism. A well-known scholar and author with a flair for creative work, Dr. Mohanty has a bee in his bonnet about creative pursuits; and he has been editing two popular magazines along with a research journal of repute. Professors Satyanarayan Mohanty and Harekrushna Patnaik were two of our successful teachers and have retired since. Also working with us in the 60s was Amulya Ch. Samanta one of our Hons. students and an M.A. from Allahabad, who had a remarkable meekness about him.

Jitendranarayan Patnaik and Soubhagya Kumar Misra, two of our bright students, joined our Department as lecturers In 1964 and 1965 respectively. A scholar in literary criticism, Dr. Patnaik was Director of ELTI of late, and is a senior Principalnow. A first class first of his batch and a renowned poet of our time, Dr.Soubhagya K. Misra is Professor, Department of English, Berhampur University. Around1966 we welcomed the last batch of lecturers who joined us before my departure in December 1968. They included Debendra Kumar Ray who came ontransfer from B. J. B. College, Bhubaneswar. Mahajiteswar Das, from F. M. Collage, Balasore and Nrusingh Kumar Rath from G. M. College, Sambalpur,all of whom were successful teachers. A first class first of the 1960 batch, Dr. D. K. Ray has, after an eventful career, retired as Director of ElementaryEducation. Prof. N. K. Rath, an acknowledged poet from his student career, has retired as Principal, Rajdhani College, Bhubaneswar. Dr.Mahajiteswar Das, a well-known teacher of linguistics, has been working In Utkal University.

The P.G. Department of English, Ravenshaw College, precedes Utkal University by more than two decades. Since it is a P.G. institute of 75 year's sanding, we may pause a moment to assess the trends of Its academic tradition during all these years. Not knowing much about its initial stage except a few brilliant names like Professors K. P. Neogl, Kruttibas Samantaral, Girija Shankar Ray, etc., we maypresume that at the beginning the teaching norm would have been more or less the same as elsewhere in the country. The later part of the first quarter (1922- 47) was dominated by Profs. P. S. Sundaram and V. V. John. As I came to know them in my youth, they were wonderful teachers, both from Oxford, andused to concentrate on standard literary interpretations. In the university where I had studied, I had marked three different literary trends beingfollowed- an adjustment of the critical focus with reference to the Indian perspective, especially as regards romantic poetry; a tilt towards leftist criticismin interpreting social novels; and, of course, the modernist line of analytical criticism that

had come into vogue in the forties. In 1952 when I joined our Department, the literary perspective being followed here was steadfastly analytical and modern. In the Seminar Library I could this time get a copy of not only *The Well-wrought Urn* (1947), which had been not there in 1948, but also an uptodate publication like The Common Pursuit (1952), which Prof. B. Das advised me to consult before handling *Othello* in the following session. The entire credit of perspective building and trend setting goes to him. Indeed it is he who led the way. And our students of successive batches have carried the trend far and wide: all thisat a time when the paperback wave had not made its grounds well in the distant offing!

I beg excuse if I venture to make a presumptuous remark in this connection here. It is after 1966 that the three universities of Orissa started their English Departments. The light enkindled by them proceeded from the source kept ablaze in Ravenshaw College over decades. The University Departments from the very inception came to be manned by the brilliant products of Ravenshaw, which proves beyond doubt the continuity of our tradition. As members of the older generation we are proudthat our own 'children' at the three centres have set up their new households and are managing them admirably well.

A word on our syllabus and courses of study may not be out of place here. The perspective of teaching is usually reflected through the syllabus. By 1952, most north Indian universities had their paper-wise division of syllabus on the basis of literary forms like poetry, drama, fiction, non-fictional prose, etc.along with a couple of special papers. Our syllabus, in comparison, was comprehensive with the papers conforming to literary periods from M. E. to Post-Victorian Era with one paper on Criticism and one for a single literary essay. We introduced American Literature as substitute for the Literary Essay from the 1967 Examination onwards, which was a pioneering step. American Literature has caught the imagination of students and consequently a large number ofstudents of our university have done doctoral studies on related topics. As far as I remember we introduced linguistics in our syllabus with effect from 1973 Examination and students are immensely benefited from its study. In framing our courses of study we have always aimed at extensive covering of the whole range of literature along with 'provision for In depth study of the representative literary texts.

The roll strength of our Department started rising in the late 50s. Till 1957, it was only 16 and the classes used to be held in the Kanika Library Annexe about which

I have said at the beginning. In 1958, the strength rose to 32 for which the classes were shifted to a comparatively big room in the officewing. That was the year I think when Haladhar Panda, Qamruddin Khan, Kartik Chatterji (alas, he has left us I). Kulamani Patel and NarasinghaSahu, (whobecame a lecturer in Christ College) etc. were in their final year. Next year we shifted to Room No. 3 adjacent to the College Dispensary. I feel likementioning to my young readers a trifling change in student attitude that took place in 58-59, which then looked like an Innovation. That year the strength of women students had gone up and it looked so awkward when a number of girls, as per the custom prevailing then, kept standing in the corridor outside the class room until the teacher arrived. Advised by us, they broke the old custom and kept sitting inside the class-room together with the boys, whether the teacher was there or not. Among the girls, as I remember, were Sushama Mishra and Bandana Das (5th year), Sadhana Roychoudhuri and Manasi Ushamohan (6th year); the Seminar Secretary was Panchanan Muduli (6th year), who with us is no more. Till 1965-67, the batch of Bishnucharan Das, Ramesh Chandra Misra, Haripriya Singh, Prasanna Kumar Sahu, Kalyani Misra, etc. the strength of students was 40. The next year, the batch of Subhash Chandra Pani, it was increased to 56. In 1968, for the 5th yearclass I used to lecture in the Geology Department hall, so the proposed exodus to the new Block was imminent.

Three decades have passed after I left Ravenshaw College - thirty years of rapid changes! Many of the shining morning faces, listening orspeaking to me in or outside the classes then, appear today touched with the maturing rays of the afternoon. Reminiscing about my life at Ravenshaw College now in my declining years, I consider myself lucky on two accounts. A great philosopher once said, it is also great piece of luck to have worked in unison with so many professors of Ravenshaw College who represented Orissa's mature mind in the mid-century. More covetable still, I have had the uniquechance of association with so many young minds, in the most formative period of their life, who constitute the real Orissa of today. I do not know if that hashelped my growth as a teacher, but I know for certain that my association with them has made me what could not otherwise be. As I have said often, I do recollect most of my students wherever I might have taught them. In particular, I remember all my P.G. English students of Ravenshaw College and could give you their account batch-wise, but should not do so, for that would be a catalogue, which I used to forbid. So, with apology to those who are not referred to here, let me speak of some representative students broadly. I would indicate within brackets the year they took their M.A. degree wherever I can remember.

Let me begin with the creative writers who make up a good number including the celebrities like Ramakanta Rath and Manoj Das. Rath, the outstanding poet of our time, was a bright student marked by his pliant voice, shinning eyes and intelligent approach, as I see him in my mind's eye sitting in Room No. 33 along with his class mates, Harihar Panda, Harihar Rath, Alaka Chatterji and others in my Honours class in 1953. He did his M.A. securing the first position in 1957. Right from his early writings at the Degree stage he struck a new voice in Oriya poetry. He has succeeded in forging a new Idiom for his poetry competently and earned laurels for our literature to make us proud. He is a loving soul and I think he is greater than the positions hehas held. The other noted figures in the realm of poetry that I had the privilege to claim among our students include luminaries like Sourindra Barik and Nrusingh Kumar Rath (1961), Soubhagya Kumar Mishra (1965), and Paresh Chandra Rout (Hons. 1956), who did his post-graduation from Delhi University. Among the writers of Indian English poetry I feel proud of Sarbeswar Samal, who was also my colleague for a few years at Bhadrak College, Prafulla Kumar Jagadeb (1966) of Christ College, M.A. Bari (1965), who also writes in prose and Bibhu Prasad Padhi, presently of S. C. S. College, Puri. One is pleased tofind in their poetry a strain of Oriya sensibility underlying their Indian-ness and above all a depiction of Orissan customs, rituals family relationship, landscape and the use of some specific imagery.

An eminent writer of Oriya short stories and a bilingual author, Manoj Das did his M.A. in 1959. A class-mate of Ranjit Roy, Ashok Patra, Krishnamohan Acharya and Sadhana Rochoudhury, etc. Manoj was a bit shy in my class as I knew him intimately. He had begun as a poet of creditable verse and edited arespectable literary magazine while a school boy of 15 and was somewhat a mature writer in his college days. The most impressive thing about hiswriting was originality, a sign of genius. Well-known among our students as story writers are: Sailendra Mahapatra (1963), who was also my colleague at Bhadrak College, Prabhat Mahapatra (1965), presently on the staff of B. J. B. College, and two younger ex-students, Yashodhara Behera (Mishra)and SaratSatapathy (Hons. 1969), a Reader in Utkal University. There are a few novelists, too. Uppermost in my mind is the picture of Uday Chandra Mahapatra (1961) (may be if not retired, a Principal in some Government College now), then a shy and sensitive youth whom I have not met for years. One of his novels, Tatinira Dui Dhara (Two Branches of a Stream) wasdramatised by the late lamented Dr. Pranabandhu Kar and directed by me for our College Annual Drama in 1959. Two other novelists are Nilamani

Sahu (1971), now in S. C. S. College and Dharanidhar Sahu (Hons. 1968-69), Reader in English, Berhampur University. As a creative writer Dr. Ganeswar Mishra, Professor of English, Utkal University deserves special mention. In 1964 he had presented to me a copy ofhis maiden novel Samudrika when he was in his 5th year class. He has travelled a long way since and attempted diverse literary forms including features, but what impresses me most is the simple, matter-of-fact prose style that he has developed as his own. And what is more, he has been making laudable efforts to get the masterpieces of Oriya literature translated into English under the aegis of his literary association 'Satreeth'. A happy blend of reasoningand affection, he appears to me as a gentle spring of inspiration, for he can coax even a barren person like me to contribute an occasional write-up to his bulletin. At this place I may also refer to some of our ex-students who used to excel or indulge in performing arts. The pride of place should go to Sushama Mishra and Shiba Sekhar Sircar for their histrionic talents; and also to our colleague Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty who acted the major role in Albee's *The Zoo Story*. Sushama Mishra and Bandana Das gave dance demonstrations in Odissi style. Those who showed talent for music include Bishnupriya Das (Mohanty), Anima Mishra (Kar), Prafulla Chandra Mohanty (present Principal of Kantilo College) and his batch mate, Parameswar Mohanty, also a Principal somewhere. Prafulla used to sing popularsongs while Parameswar I think, used to practise classical music.

The next group of students I would recollect comprises executives, those who held administrative posts under Government or in Corporations. In 1956, Nimai Charan Das Joined IRS. He had been a first class first In Philosophy Hons. from S. C. S. College and had Just done his M.A. with us. During my working days the following bright alumni of the English Department went over to I.A.S.: Surendra Mishra and BhaskarPatnaik (1962) Samar Ballabh Mahapatra (Hons. 1963), Krishna Kumar, Aurobinda Pandit, Madan Mohan Mohanty, who was a first class M.A. and anequally good cricketer, is presently a secretary to Government of Orissa. S. B. Mohapatra is a Secretary to Government of India while Subash Pani is a Deputy Commissioner in the Election Commission. Prafulla Mishra, a tall young man who stood first at the Honours Examination of 1958 was selected to join IPS in his 5th year before the final examination, which he took after one year. It is shocking to us that he is no morein this world. Another brilliant and affectionate student, Ramesh Chandra Mohanty, who stood first at the M.A. Examination, 1965 opted for IPS and ispresently IG (Railways). Some of

our good students opted for Banking service too, Manoranjan Hota (1961) who had been a member of our staff for abrief while joined SBI in 1962. SimilarlyTarabhusan Nanda (1965) also a colleague of mine at G. M. College, Sambalpur left teaching for banking in 1970. Three others joined Banking Service straight away: Ashok Patnaik, K. Seshagiri Rao (1968) now at Hyderabad and Prasanna Panda, Presently R. M.,State Bank of Indore. I carry a feeling that Ashok and Seshagiri were nostalgic to start with, but they are happy. Dhirendra Kumar Ray (1962) and P. Rajgopal (1969) have gone abroad during their tenure of service and have outshone in their career.

I would now call back to mind the major group of students who accepted the teaching profession. Members of my own fraternity, they come crowdingthick and fast in my mind; and for omissions I must apologize unconditionally. In 1952, when I joined, my welcome meeting happened to be a farewell meeting for Janardan Patel who had just done M.A. that year. The next year we saw off Manish Chakrabarty. In 1954, we saw off Purna Chandra Mahapatra (a writer of short stories with a satirical tinge), Banshldhar Sahu, C. J. Chineswar Rao, Minaketan Purchll and Choudhury Janaki Nanda. Except Nanda who expired prematurely in anaccident, all others have served full time as teaches and have retired by now.

Of Gour Kishore Das's batch (1953-55), I would mention Giridhari Prasad Guru as a model of diligence. He was the only student of the batch whoprepared a forbidding text like *Culture and Anarchy* and studied L. Trilling's *Matthew Arnold* assiduously.Of the same batch Ahmed Bux was an unforgettable student marked for his cordial relationship and socialisation. The next batch consisted of students like Md. Fakiruddin, D. K. Samantaray, N. R. Dubey and Nandakishore Pujahari, all of whom were serious students. Except Nayanram who joined O.F.S., others became all college teachers. A reputed teacherholding different positions, Fakiruddin was President of O.G.C.T.A. for years. D. K. Samantray and N. K. have both rendered yeoman's service asController of Examinations / Registrar etc. to Utkal and Sambalpur universities respectively.

Dr. Haladhar Panda, one of our ideal Professors now retired, was a lopper at the University Examinations and a voracious reader in his student days (1956-58). His batch mate Alekh Patnalk, who has retired as a Director In O.F.S., possessed fine critical sensibility, but had a slow hand, for which he couldnot complete his answers. Of the batch 1957-59 Ranjit Roy and Ashok Patra were as smart as they were intelligent; the former used to amuse students by caricature. To this batch belonged a good student

called Karanjit Singh who had stood first at the B.A. Honours Examination. For a certain psychic malady Karanjil discontinued his study. C. S. P. Mahapatra (1958-60) was a good student of his batch, but hebecame a victim of the anomaly of the examination system. He took the Part I and Part II Examinations In successive years as per the new provision, insteadof taking them together at the end of the Course as per the old time option. Though he scored highest marks in both the examinations, he failed to secure the highest marks on the whole. Raghunath Panda of the same batch was a good student; he made his marks as an all-round teacher and has retired since. I think Basanti Mahapatra was also a student of this batch or the next.

I have already referred to some students of 1959-61 batch, I should mention two others, namely Mathuranath Das and Buddhadev Brahma. Mathuranath was impressive for his practical nature and gentle behaviour. Buddhadev was a brilliant student, but later the developed some psychic problems, for which he preferred to remain aloof. The two have retired by now. Of the next batch (1960-62) while the majority opted for executive jobs, two good scholars chose to be college teachers. Dr. Pabitra Mohan Nayak had stood first in his batch. In his college days he was also a good debater and a winner of the Chancellor's cup. I owe Pabitra an apology, for on account of some kind ofinterference with the name of an ex-minister, I have often referred to him as P. M. Pradhan and he has accepted it with a smile. The other one is Ramesh Chandra Patnaik, who has worked as my colleague and helped me in personal life when I broke down. Both Dr. P. M. Nayak and Prof. R. C. Patnaik haveoccupied administrative positions and both have retired since.

Dr. Madhusudan Pati and Dr. Tapas Chakravarty belonged to the batch 1961-63. Madhu was one of our most sensible scholars who impressed us by his intelligent approach. Tapas was gentle and had varied interests. Having worked for about twodecades as Professor of English at Sambalpur University, Dr. Pati is at present a foremost Professor in the country. Dr. Chakravarty, presently principal S. C. S. College, is a successful administrator guiding student by his leadership. He also excels in giving running commentaries on cricket matches, both ODIs and Tests. To this batch belonged Paresh Chandra Das., Purna Chandra Das, Debidas Mahapatra and Ram Chandra Rout, all of them verysuccessful teachers. I remember still the well documented answers of Paresh and Purna. The next batch (1962-64) included Bibhudhendra Narayan Patnaik and Prafulla Kar, two outstanding Professors of English, stationed at Kanpur and

Badodara respectively. Patnaik used to write well prepared answers in small letters and score high marks, but at items, he behaved as a cavalier. I think Kar excelled others by his strong resolve. I would give him threecheers for his extensive love for research. Prafulla's class mates and close friends were two Krushnas, namely Dr. Krushna Ch. Misra and Prana Krushna Giri. Both are loving types; but while Krushna was all seriousness before us, Pranakrushna would speak with a fine sense of humour to regale your spirit. With apology to three ex-students I would bear reliable evidence as to their voracious eating. Perhaps they ate more voraciously than they used to read. To thisdelightful batch belonged Manasi Chandra. Dugesh Nandini Das. Nirakar Panigrahi, Helen Misra and Himanshu Misra.

A good number of students of 1963-65 batch joined as lecturers: Satya Shankar Mishra, Prafulla Kumar Mishra, Debabrata Mishra, Prabhat Kumar Mahapatra, Hrushikesh Mishra, Rajkishore Mishra, etc. all of whom have proved their mettle in the profession. Among all, Dr. Shyam Sundar Mahapatra, Professorof Oriya, Viswabharati, who switched over to Oriya after his M.A. in English, deserves special mention for his spectacular success. I have a strong feelingthat exposure to a foreign literature is a feather in the cap for a teacher of Indian literature. Precisely for this reason I have persuaded some English M.A.s to switch over to Oriya literature and one of them, Dr. Hafizulla Neulpuri, rightly went over to the study of Urdu. He has made a name as poet and critic.

From among the next batch of students (1964-66) a few names float buoyant in my mind: Jugal Kishore Chand and Srinibas Tripathy, both of whomteach at Utkal University; Markanda Chandra Mishra, a sincere teacher posted to some Government college, Anil Kumar Mahapatra, now on the staff of S. C. S. College, Puri, etc. J. K. Chand is an expert in Linguistics, whom I consult now and then. Dr. S. Tripathy is an affable type, but a tough scholar,Markanda, when he worked with me some twenty-five years ago, impressed me as a solid teacher and a stickler for good English. Anil's activeness is his forte. I haven't met the last two for a quarter century.

Of the next batch (65-67) I have already made a reference to a few students in connection with the rise of our roll strength. The students of this batch include popular teachers like Dr. Harapriya Singh and Dinesh Patnaik (post-graduation from Delhi University, 67), Dr. Sadananda Mishra, Prasanna Sahu, Ramesh Chandra Mishra, Kalyani Mishra, Purabi Bose, Sarbadaman Mohanty, etc. Teachers of the next batch (1966-68)

are: Sanat Das Patnaik, Trilochan Acharya, Durga Prasanna Das, Prafulla Kumar Panda, Gopa Das, Bidyutlata Nanda, Pankajbala Mahapatra, Kiran Kumari Misra, Manju Patnaik, Haranath Mishra, Niti Ranjan Chand, Subash Tripathy Chinmay or Kalu (?) Jena, etc. I think most of these students would be around 50 today and they wouldbe working as Principals, Readers or Senior Lecturers sharing responsibilities both in colleges and at home. Let me wish them best of luck. Let me also take thisopportunity to mention Dr. Bhagaban Prakas of the batch 1968 who was a scholar of mine for his Ph.D. degree. He is a noted social organiser of our country and is an Officer of the Commonwealth Asia Centre, Chandigarh.

Now I crave the indulgence of my readers to mention one or two stray cases. A number of brilliant Hons. students left Ravenshaw College for post-graduation outside. Of course, I have mentioned a few already, but I should include among them the name of Dr. Biyot Kesh Tripathy, one of our outstanding Professors. He did Honours with us and post-graduation in Calcutta University. As far as I look back, I visualise him as a smart, intelligent and soft-spoken student inthe class-room. During my long teaching at Ravenshaw, I have come across only two Sanskrit knowing scholars among our students: Rajkishore Mishra and Sadananda Mishra, both of whom have done substantial work in the field of culture in addition to their study proper. Dr. Sadananda Mishra has toured extensively in connection with his cultural project. He once told me what I too had felt on my own mere literature is not enough; one should plunge beyond.

We used to get some stray students now and then, but they usually shaped well. For instance, in the late 50s two TTIs of S. E. Railway, Gouripada Tripathy and Deba Prasad Sarangi who were working against some convenient posts did their M.A. in English. They were both good students and became successful lecturers. Similarly Nimal Charan Parlja, who was in subordinate medical service did his graduation from the Evening College and then his M.A. in 67. Parija was my colleague at Bhadrak College and I found in him an admiral lecturer. A sizeable number of school teachers have attended our classes and come out successful and later they have become lecturers. Prof. Harekrushna Patnaik is a bright example. Oher examples are late Ram Chandra Tripathy, Raghunath Nayak and Nityananda Ray.

Students of our Department did not lag behind in extracurricular activities. Krishnamohan Acharya and Ashok Patra were outstanding Senior cadets, andI think Krishnamohan became an officer in the Auxiliary Force for a couple of years. Among

our students there were a number of cricketers. Beside Madan Mohanty, we had Saradindu Mishra (Kunal the Jena brothers - Kalu and his brother, and Prakas Roychowdhury. K. L. N. Swamy and Rankanath Hala were, I think, good humourists. While Hota is a Principal of some private college, Swamy, a retired Professor of Stewart College, is living after retirement at Sai Ashram, Puttaparty. Incidentally speaking, at Putiaparty Bijay Misra, a student of the mid 60s and an ardent devotee is working as a lecturer.

Two other students often peep into my mind. One is Sisir Behera, a retired officer of LIC, who became so conscious about a good class at the Examination, that he could not be persuaded to sit for it. The other is Dharanidhar Rout, who having missed a good class joined the Police Department as an S. I. and has risen to the post of inspector. But he is too shy to have met us all these years.

Let me conclude my reminiscence with on anecdote. On March 21 at S. C. S. College I met a former student of mine – a cheerful, middle-aged man with a smiling face working there as a lecturer.

"Do you recognise me, Sir?", he asked.

"Why, you are so-and-so; Batch 66, Roll No. 396." I replied. He was a boy of likeable manners. and luckily I remembered him well. This, roll number and all, Is a coincidence; but let me tell you remember most of my students because they are sovaluable to me: they make up my family as a teacher Years back I fell into a terrible void in life and the dead weight of despair hung heavy on the beatings of my heart. Battered and broken, like a reptile have wriggled out of that void clinging to my greater family to which I am bound in a relationship determined by duty. So those who brightened my forenoon, to them I look back in love.

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



In Memoriam

H. P. Mohanty
Former Professor and Head
Department of English,
Ravenshaw College, Cuttack

My association with the Department of English, Ravenshaw College, was in two forms. One, as Honours student two years (1945-47). Two, as teacher for about 14 years (1957-73) with two short breaks. Then after a long break of ten years a short tenure of $1^{1/2}$ years. Altogether $17^{1/2}$ years.

The Department of English was for a long time (1922-50) the only Post-graduate department in the whole college. British regime, saheb rulers, the subject their great language, provision for Honours and post-graduate studies in that! No wonder a general euphoria of superior status, prestige and prominence prevailed amongst the Departmental folks, nonassertively though. With the opening of Post-graduate departments in the late forties full-fledged in the fifties, in almost all other subjects the English euphoria dimmed and dispersed.

During my Honours years the Department had two Oxford M.A.s Prof. P. S. Sundaram who was the Head and Prof. V. V. John next in rank both of them excellent teachers, each in his own fascinating style. In 1944 three bright Oriya freshers joined the department. Sri B. Das, Sri P. K. Pati, Sri N. K. Mishra, each of them became professor and head in this department later, each a competent teacher and a capable administrator. There was one senior member Mr. Girija Shankar Ray famous for his phenomenal memory. The teachers strength was 7 to 8. In 1982 it was 24.

Soon after acquisition of independence there started expansion and development of education all over the country. The Orissa Government launched a sponsoring scheme of foreign studies according to which some first class. M.A.s M.Sc.s selectively were sent abroad in batches to acquire higher qualifications. Foreign establishments in India floated scholarships too. British Council, U. S. I. S., Commonwealth directorate were the main ones. A.S.R.C. offered research grants of various grades plenty, their only condition, the researches will have to be America related. Naturally, one who pays the piper calls the tune. C. I. E. F. L. provided Fellowships to in-service teachers of colleges and schools. Prof. B. Das, a scholar extraordinary, obtained his A.M. (Columbia) B.Litt. (Oxon) and some years later Prof. P. K. Pati obtained his A.M., Ph.D. (Minnesota) on Government sponsoring. Prof. Mrs. P. N. Das and Prof. Sarbeswar Das got their A. Ms

as Fullbright scholars.These constituted the first generation of foreign qualified teachers of the Department In independent India.

Then came the U.G.C. the fountain-head of all educational reforms and developments. Its stipulation was M.A. or M.Sc. however bright was not enough, additional research qualifications like doctorate, M. Phil etc. are a must for promotion, at least to Professorship. And the U.G.C. contributed immensely by substantial funding and guiding the Institutions for the achievement of the goal.

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The compulsion inflicted by the U.G.C., was soon transmuted to inspiration, obsession at the level of teachers. The miasma of pre-independence diffidence and inertia of English teachers evaporated. There was a flurry of research activities that resulted in a rich harvest of doctorates, M.Phil.s, A.M.s etc. Besides there were the routine academic rounds: seminars, visiting fellowships, guest lectures, annual day speakers, summer courses etc. Of late, I hear, that department is bringing out a half-yearly journal of specialist articles by the inmates of the department and outsiders (academic) also entirely with internal subscriptions. Great! The students ontheir side reciprocated with ardent receptiveness and avid assimilation of knowledge. This excellent phase (fifties to eighties) of communion and rapport between the teachers and students was the golden age of academic pursuit in the anna's of English Department.

The luminaries of the subsequent generations are large in number. Doctorates and devoted teachers all. Much as I would love to make a roll call of all those who have struck eminence inside the state and outside it I cannot do so as I do not have their intellectual biodata in hand. Even so I mention two M.A.s of this Department who have acquired all-India eminence. Prof. G. K. Das with his M.A. (Bristol) Ph.D. (Cantab), after adorning all the prestigious posts of Delhi University except the apex has come back to Orissa as Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University. Prof. P. C. Kar A.M., Ph.D. (Utah, America) now Professor and Head of the Department of English. Baroda University has distinguished himself by producing a score of doctorates or more, a unique achievement.

Dr. Madhusudan Pati is one solid scholar with first class Honours and first class M.A., rare double first, the first one from this Department and with mastery over Sanskrit, now the senior most Professor of English, Sambalpur University, has produced doctorates and published books and papers in English and Oriya.

Amongst those who did not acquire ostentatious qualifications beside M.A. there were (and are) many quiet. dedicated teachers like Prof. T. Mishra who worked in the department a long while 16 years or more.

An extraordinary man now world-renowned for his all-inclusive creative literature (story, novel, prose, poetry, journalism et al, a world over roving guest speaker, a senior resident Yogi of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a member of their executive Board of Trustees is our Mano) Das who was an M.A. alumnus of this Department (1955-57). The department feels elated and happy.

The script of this memoir so far might image the Department as a forbidding high serious affair yielding no place to song and laughter Nothing at the sort. Young students anywhere will fall in love and make merry. And in this department lectures have fallen in love and married. A student of the department, Susama Mishra dared the prevailing public opinion against girls taking part in College dramas, took part in them, acquitted well with her histrionic talent and represented Orissa in All India Youth Festivals (drama section) and gathered laurels for herself, for the department and for the state Musicians were always there, small class room crooners and big open-air performers. Sportsmen? Why, Sri Madan Mohanty was a first class Honours first class M.A. of the department, (the second double first class after M. S. Pati) a state cricket player and captain, now a top brass of I.A.S., Orissa cadre.

A piece of information just came to my hand. Now a days the students go out picnicking twice a year. One, in company with the teachers, another In company with each other. Delightful!

One thing I will not leave unmentioned. To my observation and experience, in the early eighties discipline and decorum which were the prized and envied mode of conduct of Departmental folks were somewhat maimed. A pity, considering the tradition maintained since the British regime by a long line of able Heads of Department who held two things, sound teaching and propriety of conduct, in high premium. The fall from grace may be due to the tyranny of numbers (104 seats in M.A. and 60 in Honours my and of low-key politics, the two forks of the tongue of the serpent that entered the Eden of Academe.

All in all, my long Innings in English Department of Ravenshaw College had been a happy one. That is why I readily agreed to write this memoir when a senior staff member and erstwhile student of mine approached me for it.

[Reprinted from the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir]



The First Decade of the Drama at Cuttack

Girija S. Ray
Assistant Professor, English

On the 20th October, 1877, an advertisement was published in the *Utkal Dipika* regarding Babaji Natak in which the author, Babu Jaganmohan Lal, wanted to portray in the form of several dialogues the kidnapping of a lady and her rescue by annas ascetic. This book was priced at four annas and was really a small comic sketch satirizing the looseness of character of the Mahantas. In commenting on this drama in the issue of Utkal Dipika, dated the 3rd November, 1877, the editor pointed out that "this was the first attempt to write a drama in Oriya; and although it was not a real drama if we adhere too strictly to the standard laid down by the English and Sanskrit dramatic writers, still, if we compare this book with others books of a similar nature, it will not be a mistake to call this a drama. The author has very beautifully demonstrated what should be the real nature of language and presentation in a dramatic composition." In the very next year, in February, 1878, a drama was for the first time staged in Orissa on the night of the Saraswati Puja. Some gentlemen of the town of Cuttack staged a Bengali drama by Babu Manmohan Bose called *Ramabhishek* and they had to depend upon public subscription to meet the expenses of this performance. This drama was staged again about a fortnight later at the residence of Babu Golok Chandra Bose who was a very well-known Zamindar in those days; and when Sie Ashley Eden the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal visited Orissa in March of the same year, this drama was again staged as a piece of entertainment in the Durbar pandal at 9 o' clock in the evening. The success of this performance led to squabbles and the rise of rival parties, and Babu Haramohan Mitra who was also a leading Zamindar in those days financed a party which was composed mainly of school students and as a result of these quarrels there could be no dramatic performance in 1879.

The two rival parties were reconciled again in 1880 and on the Saraswati Puja day Michael Madhusudan's immortal farce *Ekei ki Bale Savyata* (Is This to be Called Civilization?) was staged by the combined efforts of both the parties and the cost was met by the two rival landlords.

The *Kanchikaberi* was written in 1880, one year after the author passed the F.A. Examination. It was to have been staged on the Saraswati Puja day of 1881, but this

could not materialize, and on the 7th February of 1881, it was staged for the first time at the residence of Babu Gopal Prasad Mitra. The *Utkal Dipika* in commenting on this (12th February, 1881) says, "It is a very costly thing to prepare the scenes and stage for a dramatic performance and the rich men of the town have no sympathy for such shows." The comments of the *Dipika* on the drama and its performance were also very severe and it appears that the audience were so dissatisfied with the performance of this play that another Bengali drama *Padmavati* had to be staged by the same party. The *Kanchikaberi* however had to be staged again on the 12th match, 1881 and the author himself had to take some part in the acting. The performance was more successful than the first attempt, but the respectable persons of the town did not attend, and the audience consisted mainly of school students who created such a noise that it was difficult to sit out the whole performance.

The *Banabala*, the second regular drama in Oriya, was composed in 1882 and was acted for the first time on the 21st January, 1882 at the residence of Babu Haradhan Ghose at Mahidasbazar, and an attempt was made to meet the expenses by sale of tickets. This drama was acted again on the 4th February, and for the third time on the 18th February, and although the drama was adversely commented upon and two gentlemen under the influence of drink created trouble throughout the performance, it was regarded as a distinct advance on the previous drama and was commented upon as "not inferior to any Bengali drama" (corresponded column in the *Utkal Dipika,* dated 11th March 1882).

In the very first month of 1883, a Hindi dramatic party visited the town of Cuttack and staged some dramas dealing with stories from the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* but the English party was not very well received, and the use of English words by Rushyasrunga and his fellow students in one of the comic scenes was also so ludicrous that the audience hooted out the show. Meanwhile the author of *Banabala*had been exasperated by the drunken rows of gentlemen during the performance of his drama, and a Society for the Prevention of Drinking had been established in the town of Cuttack through the efforts of Babu Dinanath Bannerjee. The author therefore set out to compose a drama ridiculing drinking and *Kalikala* was written in 1883 and was arranged to be acted for the first time at the residence of Babu KalipadaBannerjee on the 3rd March 1883. But there was very heavy rain on that date, so the performance had to be postponed and the drama was actually performed on the 10th, 17th and 24th of March at the same place. This drama was immensely popular but the sale of tickets was not satisfactory, so that besides the help rendered to the actors by Babu Kalipada

Bannerjee, a sum of Rs. 56 was raised by public subscription to meet the expenses of the performance, and to this sum Babu Nandakishore Das and Mahanta Narasingha Das each contributed Rs. 10, and the Maharajah of Dhenkanal, Babu Jagmohan Ray and Babu Hariballabh Bose contributed Rs. 5 each.

In 1884, the author of *Kanchikaberi* who had been up to this time serving in various capacities, as a teacher in the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, and as a clerk in the Commissioner's Office, passed the pleadership examination and in *course* of his professional work became acquainted with Mahant Daitari Puri of Kothpada, and the Mahant established what turned out to be the first permanent stage in Orissa. By the Saraswati Puja of 1885 a stage had been erected in Kothpada and all the scenes and dresses had been purchased at considerable cost, and the *Kanchikaberi* was staged there in that year, and for nearly forty years afterwards this stage was kept up and dramas were regularly performed twice or thrice in the year.

European residents of Cuttack staged a drama during the Durga Puja in the fort in 1886 and many well-known residents were invited to the performance, but it is not possible to know now which drama was actually staged. Babu Jagmohan Lal who had written the first drama in Oriya (*Babaji Natak*) published another drama *Sati* in 1887. Mr. M. S. Das in commenting on this drama refers to the observance of the three unities by the author and says that it is almost a historical document in which the oppression practiced upon the people in the Garjats has been exposed. For a very long time this drama could not be staged and it was only in 1896 that it was for the first time acted at the residence of the author at Mahanga. The Jubilee of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria the Good was celebrated in 1887 and on this occasion a Bengali drama *Partha Parajay* was staged at the residence of Babu Kalipada Bannerjee and many European officials and their wives attended it. There was an attempt to raise money, by sale of tickets and subscriptions, for establishing a permanent stage, but the response was not satisfactory. At this time Mr. M. S. Das to whom Orissa owes so much took up the cause of the drama and established a permanent stage at his residence, entirely at his cost, and on the 17th December, 1887, a Bengali drama *Harishchandra* was staged at his place by amateur actors and this drama was again staged at the residence of Babu Lakhminarayan Ray Chowdhury at Kozibazar a few days after. Ladies had for the first time an opportunity to witness a theatrical performance in this latter show. On the 9th February 1888, *Kalikala* was staged at Lakhminarayan Babu's house and the ladies were again invited to witness the performance.

A Brahmo preacher, Babu Debi Prasanna Rai Chowdhury, visited Cuttack and delivered a lecture on "Yuga Dharma" in the Printing Company Hall, on the 5th March 1889, and it was from this lecture that the young author of*Kalikala*got the inspiration for much of the subject-matter and the title of his drama Yuga Dharma, which, however, was completed several years later. This year again a theatrical party called the Radhaballabh Theatrical party was established with the help of Babu Golok Babu found it impossible to maintain this party much longer. The Rajah of Nayagarh was invited to witness the theatrical performances held in the Barabati fort by the European residents on the 24th December, 1887, and when early in the year 1888 the amateur theatrical party raised subscription for establishing a public stage, the Rajah Saheb was pleased to promise a donation of Rs. 500 for the purpose. On the occasion of the marriage of Babu Gopal Ballav Das on the 19th April 1888, several dramas were staged at the residence of Mr. M. S. Das and this was the first occasion when such entertainment was provided for the guests on the occasion of a social function. On the 2nd June of 1888, dramas were put on board on the permanent stage at the residence of Madhu Babu and these performances were repeated the next week. The dramas were; however, Bengali (*Kiratarjuniya* and *Bibaha Bibhrat*) and the actors were school students, and there was a bitter controversy in the local press as to whether it was desirable for school boys to spend their time in theatrical performances. In the Puja holidays of this year many dramas were staged in different parts of the Cuttack district. The *Kanchikaveri* was staged at Dikhitpara in Asureswar, *Jamai Barik (*Bengali) and *Parijat Haran* (an Oriya drama by Babu Narayan Prasad Mitra) at Raghunathpur and *Ramabhishek* (Bengali) at Gopalpur. The staging of dramas had thus become a popular entertainment and the growth of the Oriya drama became naturally rapid from this time onward.

To those who are accustomed to read about the gorgeous pageantry of English literature, this simple tale of what happened in and near about Cuttack sixty years ago may prove very uninteresting, but we may hope that this narrative of one aspect of the social life of the people who lived only a few years ago may yet be capable of entertaining those who love their country above everything else.

[Reprinted from the The Ravenshawvian: October 1941, Vol-26]



Lines

Composed A Few Steps Below Kanika Library

Gour Kishore Das
VI-year Arts (English)

Written after Wordsworth's well-known poem 'LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY', this poem is the testament of love and loyalty of an alumnus, now in the topmost class, to his alma mater.

Five years have past; five winters, with the length
Of five ling summers! and ever I've heard
These voices coming from boys and girls
With a music of many tones - Ever here
Have i beheld these steep and lofty walls
That on this wide and solemn scene impress
Thoughts of more deep solemnity; and stand
As sentinals of this mighty alma mater.
This day is one in many where I stand
Here, by this library, on this gravel and view
These plots of College ground, those halls
These grass, these plants, these leaves, these flowers,
Which ever with their fragnance sweet
Have filled the air and merged themselves
In its sublimity. Here have i seen
Boys, girls, teachers, youth and old,
Worshippers in the same temple, these wild lawns
Green to the very walls; these little wells
That leap and sing such lovely lullabies,
And sun-dial standing lone.
            These beauteous forms
Through a long presence have not been to me
As Ithacan sites to great Ulysses' eye:
But oft in pensive moods, and 'neath the weight
Of cares and worries, I have owed to them,

In moods of frustration, higher hopes
Held in the mind, and a noble pride
Felt along the heart- that all these days
Since I came here in this college,

A little shy stripling in sapling teens,
Looking strange at boys, shrinking from girls,
And lifting my brows at every brick and stone,
How wonderfully I've changed in mind and manners,
Become bold, learnt virtues, discipline, art
Made friends and become a part of all
That i have met; that here so long I
A worshipper in this mighty temple
Have not ill spent my time;- a noble pride
In which the weight of all my future cares
Unemployment worries, thirst for place in life-
Base thoughts in this sick-hurry world,
Is lightened. If this be but a vain pride,
Let vanity rule my way, for I have learnt
To look on life, not as in the eye
Of a low Philistine making base bargain
And barter of soul; but hearing every time
The sweet, chastening voice of a mighty muse.
Therefore, have I ever loved this dear College,
These halls, bowers, these teachers, boys and girls,
And love them still.
        Never perchance
When these my final days are gone, and the
Breaking tides reach me a vast weary shore,
When the mirage of pearls shall allure me,
Or the infinite sands wear my yearning soul,
Never, never then shall I forget this mighty vision, -
This mighty college, this library, these teachers
These boys and girls, these dear college precincts
More dear both for itself and for their sake!

[Reprinted from the The Ravenshawvian: January 1955, Vol-36]



Oration in the College Quadrangle

Deba Prasad Patnaik
Lecturer in English

Friends, Ravenshawvians, mathematicians lend me your ears!
I come to bury Shiva, not to praise him.
The evil that mathematicians do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones!
So let it be with Shiva and his mathematicians. The analytic Tribikram

Hath told you that mathematics is interesting.
If it were so, dreadfully did he err
And dreadfully hath mathematics answered it.
Here under their leave, I come to speak-
(For noble Rabi is an honourable man!)
It was my worst subject, Chinese and gynaecology to me;
But Tribikram says it is ennobling!
Hath it not worked as an annihilation operator
And added to our failures and multiplied our woes and shame?
And so when even to-day I see men mad after mathematics,
I say men have lost their sense and think
As flies to wanton boys, are we to mathematics,
It kills us for its sport.
And literary Jatindra affirms, "It's a tale told by an idiot
Full of symbols and calculations signifying nothing."
You all did hate mathematics once, not without cause!
What cause withholds you then to mourn for Shiva?
When we have cried, the 'Queen' hath smiled;

Examination should be made of better stuff.
Yet they say mathematics id interesting,
And English is not.
Pardon me patient friends, for much have I talked on the theory,
For how could I, on such an occasion, subtract and divide myself
When my feelings multiply and grow in geometric progression?
You all know thrice at the Hall,
I presented him our empire with leprous lawns and India-smelling corridors

Which he did thrice refuse for only Hilbert's space.
Yet noble Rabi says Shiva was greedy.
And he of politics is an honourable man!
Have not I offered him rich and delicious goblets?
And hath he not refused them for Gujrati tea?
Tho' every time I did tell him not to drink tea and calculate,
For so died prolific Euler, never did he hear me.
Know yet not when I offered him Emma, Griselda and Cleopatra
He refused them all to live with the 'Queen of Sciences'?
And said,"....... Nor custom stale her infinite variety."
Yet archaeological Rajendra says that
Shiva 's was a dead soul.
When I asked him for nocturnal perambulations in lunar luxury,
He chose his permutational combinations.
You all have seen him devoted to the cause-
Of discreet problems, congruence, invariants and rational integers.
And yet hypnotic Jagannath says, (for Hypnosis was his thesis) that
Shiva was indiscreet, incongruous and unreasonable.
Did he not often lose himself in the extraction of roots?
Yet they say, he was superficial; and how then they say he lacked ideals

When he professed the Ideal- Right and Left,
And talked of Absolute in Summability and solved
The problem of Indeterminacy ?
Should you not pray on such a dark day as to-day
For the 'virtual clouds' to pass away ?
Should you not pray for 'renormalisation',
When mathematics has made our confusion worst confounded ?
Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They that have done mathematics are wise and honourable !
I have neither wit, nor words nor worth.
I only say right on; if Caesar dies, let Rome die.
And if Shiva died, let mathematics die. But though
Shiva lives, let not the principle of Continuity function for mathematics.

[Reprinted from the The Ravenshawvian: October 1941, Vol-40]





କଟକ ଉନ୍ନୟନ କର୍ତ୍ତୃପକ୍ଷ

ଅରୁଣୋଦୟ ଭବନ, ଲିଙ୍କ୍ ରୋଡ୍, କଟକ-୧୨

ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ଅବଗତି ନିମନ୍ତେ ବିଶେଷ ସୂଚନା

★ ମାଷ୍ଟର ପ୍ଲାନରେ ବାସଗୃହ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଜମି କ୍ରୟ କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଗୃହ ନକ୍ସା ସି.ଡି.ଏ ରୁ ମଞ୍ଜୁର କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

★ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଜମିର କିସମ " ଘରବାଡି" କିମ୍ବା "ଅଣକୃଷି" ହେବା ଦରକାର ।

★ ଏକ ବଡ ଜମିକୁ ଭାଗ ଭାଗ କରି ବିକ୍ରୟ କରିବା ବା ଭାଗ ପ୍ଲଟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଘର ତିଆରି କରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଭାଗ ନକ୍ସା(Lay-out Plan) କର୍ତ୍ତୃପକ୍ଷଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ମଞ୍ଜୁରୀ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

★ ନିଜ ଜମିରେ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବା ସମୟରେ " ଭୂତଳ ଜଳ " ଓ ବର୍ଷା ଜଳ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

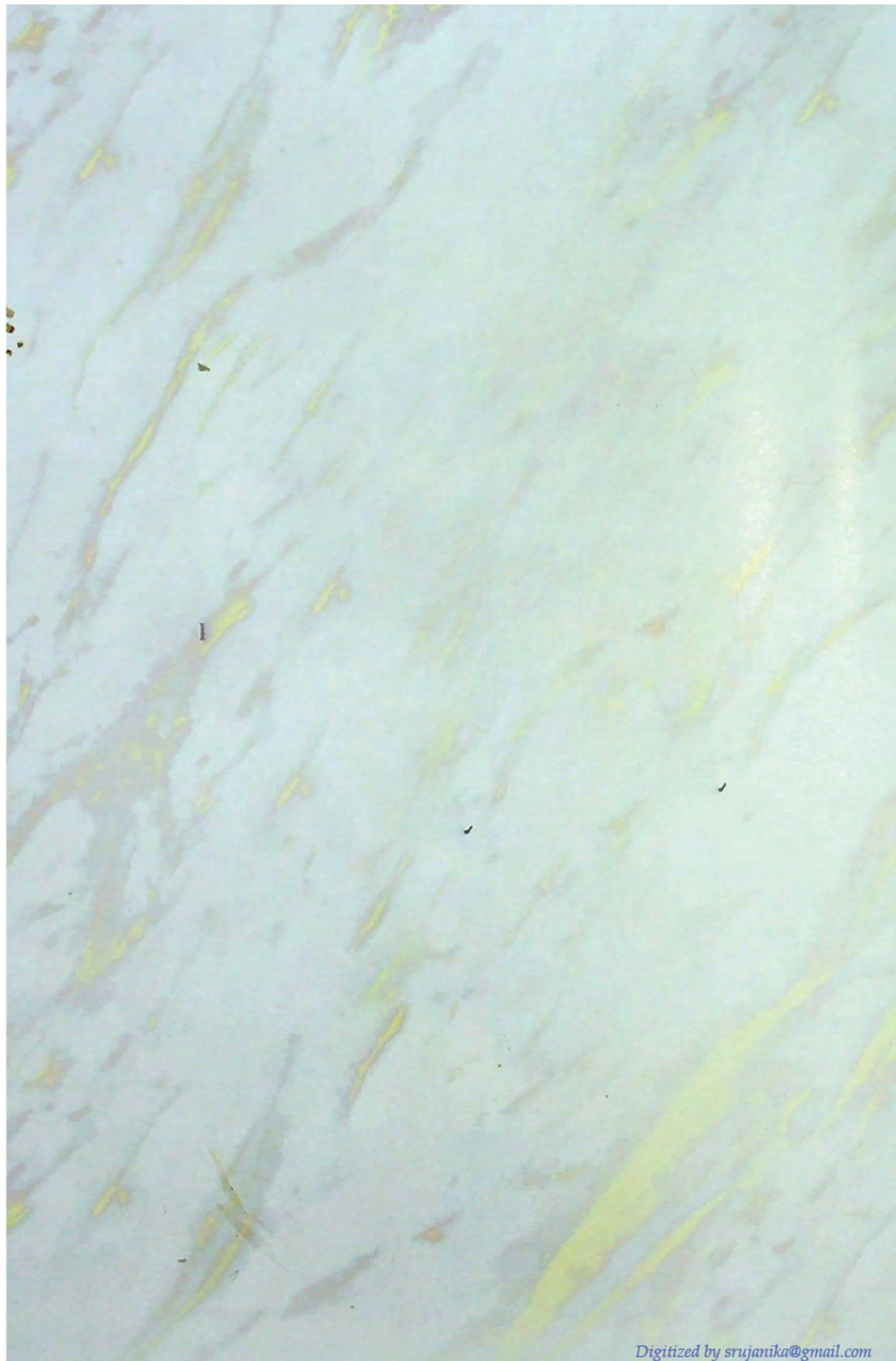
★ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସାହି,ବସ୍ତିରେ ବିନା ନକ୍ସା ଅନୁମୋଦନ କିମ୍ବା ଅନୁମୋଦିତ ନକ୍ସା ଉଲ୍ଲଙ୍ଘନରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ଗୃହ ଯଦି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ଆସେ ତାହା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ କର୍ତ୍ତୃପକ୍ଷଙ୍କ ନଜରକୁ ଆଣନ୍ତୁ ।

★ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଗୃହଟି ଯେପରି ଭୂକମ୍ପ, ବାତ୍ୟା ଆଦି ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ସହ୍ୟ କରିବାର କ୍ଷମତା ବହନ କରିପାରିବ ସେଥିଲାଗି ଦକ୍ଷ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ Structural Design ଆଣନ୍ତୁ ।

★ କୌଣସି ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରୁ ଫ୍ଲାଟ ଟିଏ କିଣିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏହାର ନକ୍ସା ସି.ଡି.ଏରେ ମଞ୍ଜୁରୀ ଓ ଏଥିରେ ରହିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ " Occupancy Certificate" ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଅବଗତ ହେବା ନିତ୍ୟାନ୍ତ ଜରୁରୀ ।

★ ପରିବେଶ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ତଥା ଅବସର ବିନୋଦନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ପାର୍କ ଗୁଡିକ ସଫା,ସୁତରା ରଖିବା ସହିତ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଜମିରେ ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ବୃକ୍ଷ ରୋପଣ କରି ପରିବେଶକୁ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ।

ଉପାଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ



One can never read too little of bad, or too much of good books: bad books are intellectual poison; they destroy the mind. In oder to read what is good one must make it a condition never to read what is bad; for life is short, and both time and strength limited.

- Arthur Schopenhauer

German Philosopher



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